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G O S P E L ;

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By *C H A R L E S B U L K L E Y*.

Τὰυτα μελέτα, τὰυτα τὰ δόγματα, τέτρες τῆς λόγους, εἰς τὰυτα ἀφόρα τὰ
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Epietet. Diff. L. IV. c. i. p. 377.

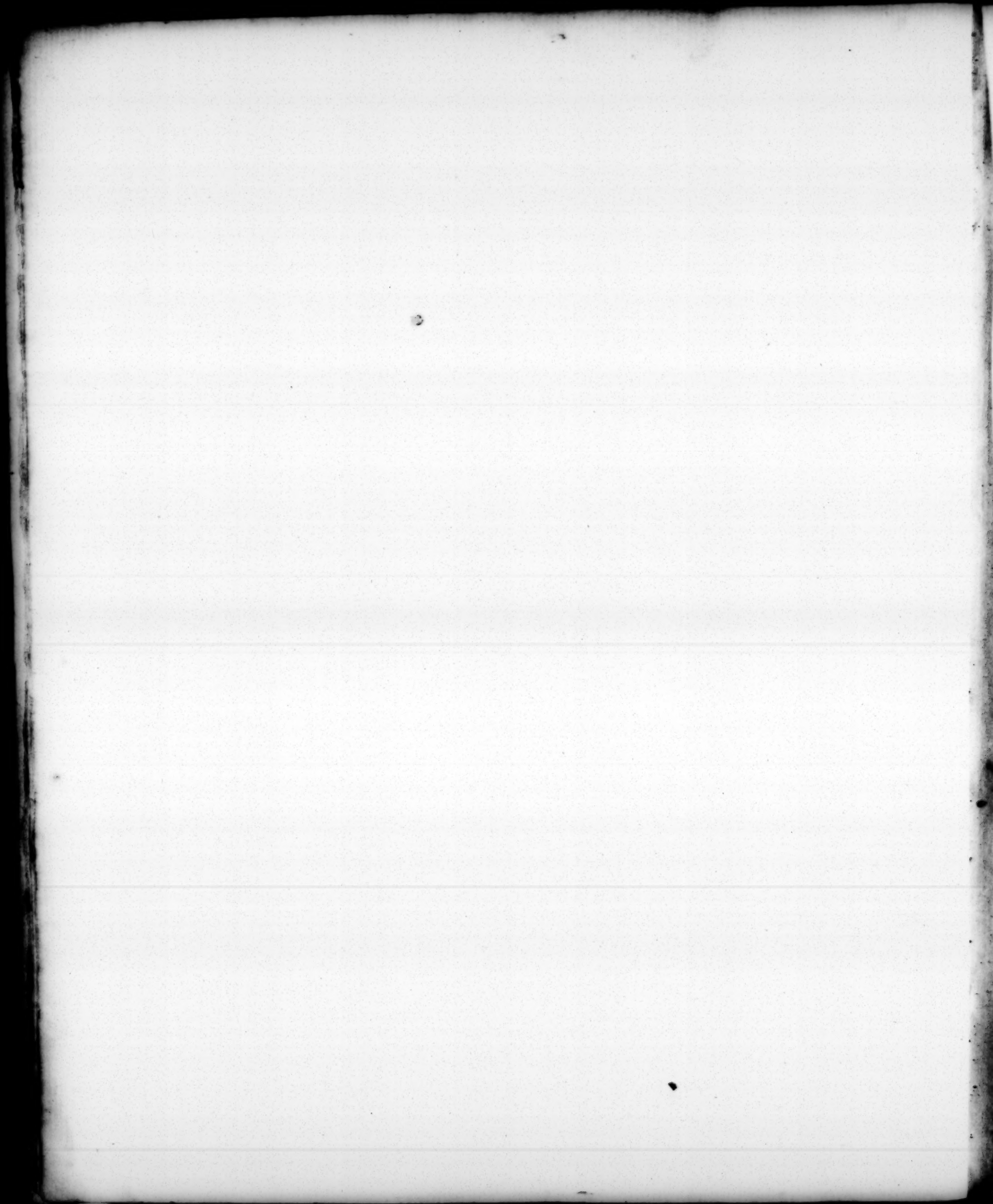
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DEDICATION.

THE intention of the following work being, as already declared, to exhibit “ A DISTINCT REPRESENTATION of ALL the PECULIAR USES, PRINCIPLES, and DUTIES of the GOSPEL, in CONNEXION with it’s GRAND and ULTIMATE DESIGN as a RELIGIOUS DISPENSATION IN GENERAL,” it is now in that view humbly submitted to the inspection and candor of those generous and worthy friends, who have encouraged the publication of it, and whose names I have the honor to annex. and to their use and service the author begs leave in this manner most sincerely to devote it.



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CONCLUSION.

To be corrected.

P. 7. l. 25. after *prayer* put comma. p. 9. l. 16. for *ευκαταλλακός* read *ἑυκατάλλακτος*. p. 10. l. last, after *represents* read *him*. p. 20. l. last, after *mind* and before *may* put comma. p. 36. l. 23. for *exite* read *excite*. p. 55. l. 9. after *use*, for full stop put comma. p. 231. l. 18. *dele* the hyphens. p. 257. l. 24. after *of* read *the*. p. 284. l. 20. read *ascension*. p. 287. l. 18, 19. *dele* inverted commas. p. 318. l. 25. *dele* the. p. 321. l. 4. for names read name. p. 378. l. 2. for *passage* read *passages*; and l. 4. for 175, read 173. p. 429. l. 27. after *world* put comma. p. 501. l. 13. after *theirs*, for full stop put ; p. 502. l. 23. for *pepetuitie* read *perpetuitie*. p. 505. l. 28. for *ideoque* read *idque*. p. 542. l. 9. after *truth* put *inverted commas*; and at lines 10 and 11 *dele the same*. p. 554. l. 13. for *will* read *would*. *ibid.* l. 26. for *evidence* read *evidences*.

I N T R O-

INTRODUCTION.

THE increase of infidelitie relative to the truth and authoritie of the christian religion, is not more generally presumed, than it is by every serious, rightly judging and consistent believer of the gospel to be deeply lamented. and truly painful is the reflexion with respect to this protestant country in particular, that, when God has put into our hands such an admirably contrived and well adapted instrument for the moral improvement of our minds, for rendering us in every relation of life better members of societie here on earth, and for promoting at the same time our meetness for the heavenly and immortal one, so many among us should be throwing it aside and publicly avowing that they intend not to make any use of it. whatever causes are to be assigned for this, the phenomenon or thing itself is truly lamentable and alarming. And it is much the more so, because we very seldom find the rejection of christianitie to be the boundarie or utmost limits of scepticism even in the case of this or that individual renouncing it. they are apt to go a great deal farther. and for
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this a very natural and obvious reason may be given. Proof, evidence and probabilitie are in the general notion of them the same what ever be the particular doctrine speculated upon or investigated. and there is in favor of our holie religion a proof so clear, distinct, ample and accumulated, that whatever be that more immediate disposition or turn of mind, which inclines a man to scepticism here, it cannot but have a natural tendencie to make him sceptical in every thing else. and what would be the consequence of such a disposition generally prevailing amongst mankind I need not say. Now it is of the greatest moment in order to a just and accurate defence of christianitie, that we fix and consolidate our idea of it, and know what it is that we mean to defend. yet how is this to be effected; but by deliberately viewing it in its full extent and in all the admirable varietie and copiousness of its doctrines; and by observing their common tenor, their beautiful and perfect harmonie with each other, and the uniform conspiring tendencie of all towards one grand and most important design? the gospel is a masterly contrivance. it is "the work of God". and the more minutely it is examined the more evidently will it prove itself to be divine. and from the internal structure of it, of which we have proposed in the following work to take a somewhat exact and critical survey, considered in conjunction with its external evidences, it does, I think, appear next to an absolute, natural impossibilitie, that it should be
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an imposture. But there is yet another reason that has urged me to this attempt. it relates to christians themselves; and is indeed a point of the utmost consequence in order to their sustaining that character with propriety and honor or with any salutary and beneficial effect. to this purpose nothing surely can be more necessary or conducive, than that we should be well acquainted with the true design, with the supreme and ultimate views of that religion we are professing. and I apprehend, that by such a distinct and punctual consideration of all its peculiar doctrines as is now before us, we shall be furnished with a clear and decisive demonstration upon this head: a demonstration arising from fact, experiment and real phenomena after the manner of natural philosophy. for whatever it be, that all the doctrines and principles, all the peculiar discoveries and injunctions of the gospel concur in illustrating, enforcing and recommending as of the highest importance, with respect both to our duty and our happiness, that is, that alone can be the true and ultimate design of it. and the more convincing, lively and persuasive our apprehensions in this particular, the more likely shall we be to pursue that design in our own temper, life and conversation. And this is what in the last place, we have proposed as the grand and principal scope of our present undertaking. without this it is a matter of very little moment whether our sentiments concerning the christian doctrine be right or wrong, accurate or superficial, rational or

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implicit.

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implicit. what will it avail, that we have the most excellent scheme of doctrine proposed to our assent; what that we have received it, as the very truth of God; what that we have decided upon the meaning of the several articles it contains, with the greatest possible propriety and exactness and according to the strictest purity and simplicity of its original promulgation, if after all our hearts remain unaffected, and there be no influence arising from it upon our life and manners? what is human society the better for a faith like this? or what benefit can we ourselves expect to receive from it? For these reasons be it here premised, that nothing can be more remote from our intention in the ensuing work than the entering into direct and formal controversy upon any point in the prosecution of it to be discussed. not the least of this kind shall we allow in treating upon the several subjects before us more than their having been actually controverted, when ever that shall be a circumstance occurring, shall make absolutely necessary. our aim is to impress the heart with a practical, lively, grateful sense of the truth and importance, the excellency, dignity and admirable tendency of the christian scheme. and extremely hard might we well account it, to be debared the privilege of insisting upon topics in themselves the most sublimely practical and full of moral efficacy, even the glorious peculiarities of the gospel itself, only because these topics have, alas, much too often been made the matter of dry and fruitless disputation. so much
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has been, and so much still continues to be, written in the polemic style and manner concerning these particular doctrines and special truths of christianitie, that we are apt to look upon them in no other light than merely as controversial points; the epithet or appellation that has sometimes been very unnaturally given to them. they are all of them of the practical kind. they abound with moral sentiments and motives. and it is in this view and no other that we design to consider them. And this according to the order, which the subject itself shall suggest. for these are doctrines not delivered at random, one at one time and another at another, without connexion or correspondent meaning. destitute of the formalitie of a system they have all the realitie and truth of it. But to a just decision upon the genuine importance both of each peculiaritie respectively and of all in conjunction, it must needs be highly requisite, that we should in brief consider what doctrines are not peculiar to christianitie, assigning, as nearly as we can, the boundaries between gospel-light and primitive revelation. this is no otherwise to be done, and in this way it will be done effectually, than by ascertaining the several doctrines belonging to the system of religion as founded originally in nature and in the very constitution and frame of man. all the rest will of course be peculiar to the gospel, or however to miraculous revelation at large. to the consideration therefore of this preliminarie topic we will now immediately procede.

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C H A P. I.

On natural religion.

IN order to that distinct and ample illustration, CHAP. I.
 which we have proposed of the great and interesting subject before us, it may be proper to enter upon some considerations relative to the mosaic institution, which claims in common with that of christianitie to be founded upon the miraculous and special mission of its author. and in consequence of some observations to be insisted upon in the following chapter, that system or dispensation of religion will, we hope, appear to have been admirably well adapted, in its tendencie, circumstances and peculiar nature, for answering the most important purposes with respect to the virtue and highest happiness of those, for whose use and service it was in the providence of the almighty ruler most immediately

mediately intended. But “ is he the God of the
 “ jews only ? is he not also of the gentiles ? yes
 “ of the gentiles also ? such was once the nobly
 animated language of the great apostle. nor was
 it the language merely of a sudden rapture or some
 transient emotion ; but introduced in confirmation
 of a conclusion, which he had laid down in the
 verse immediately preceding ; and this deduced from
 what he had been discussing at large in the former
 part of his epistle to the Romans, where we
 have it occurring. The conclusion is as follows.
 “ therefore we *conclude*, that a man is justified
 “ by faith, without the deeds of the law.” in
 order to the right understanding of which inference
 or maxim, we are to remember, that among the
 very earliest converts from judaism to christianitie
 there were some, who contended, that no proselytes
 to the christian faith, whether they had been jews
 or gentiles, could be “ saved,” unless they conform-
 ed to the rites and ceremonies of the mosaic law.
 this notion began to be propagated at Antioch.
 and on this occasion it was, that the apostolical
 council, which met at Jerusalem, and of which we
 read in the fifteenth chapter of the book of Acts,
 was convened. in opposition to this pernicious
 maxim of these judaizing christians the apostle in
 the conclusion just now mentioned lays down the
 directly contrary principle. these corrupters of
 the gospel system asserted, that no man converted
 to christianitie, whether he had been formerly a
 jew

jew or a gentile could be a partaker in the favor and approbation of the almighty, unless after this conversion he observed the jewish rites and ceremonies. on the contrarie the apostle in this conclusion insists upon it as a truth, a certain truth, that "by faith," or according to the terms of salvation laid down in the gospel "a man is justified" without the deeds of the law; without being under any necessity of paying the least regard to these ceremonial injunctions. but St. Paul was a man of a truly catholic and generous temper. and we cannot be at all conversant with his writings without perceiving, that the goodness, the universal goodness of God was one of his most delightful themes. from this therefore he fails not to deduce a farther argument in favor of the forementioned conclusion. and a very plain and forcible one it is. you, he says, to these judaizing teachers, affirm, that a man cannot be saved without observing the ceremonies of the jewish law. consider, I beseech you, what is the direct consequence of your assertion, and how highly it reflects upon the supreme and matchless benevolence of the great creator. "is he the God of the jews only? is he not also of the gentiles? yes, of the gentiles also." but with what propriety can he be called the God, the father, guardian and friend of those, whom he has not provided with sufficient means for obtaining their own final happiness and salvation? and yet according to this maxim of yours he has not done

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this with respect to vast numbers of the gentile world. upon this principle the deeds of the law, or the observance of the rites and ceremonies of judaism seem to be absolutely essential to a man's salvation. since otherwise there could be no such necessitie, as you speak of, for the gentile converts to be complying with them. and yet whole generations of the heathen world from the beginning of time to the present day have passed out of this life and entered upon a future state without having had the least knowlege of this law, or having been so much as favored with the possibilitie of obtaining it. either therefore your principle must be false or God cannot be universally good and benevolent. he must be, on admitting any such supposition, "the God" of the jews only, but the envious, cruel and malignant tyrant of the gentiles. the apostle therefore pursues his argument by observing, that "it is one God," one and the same impartial and infinitely benevolent being, "who justifies," that is, saves "the circumcision," meaning the converted jews, or rather indeed, all christians in general, who are elsewhere styled in allusion to this ancient rite, "the circumcision," "by faith and "the uncircumcision through faith." "by faith, or out of the faith, *ex πεισως*, just in the same sense, in which the slothful servant is said on the other hand to be condemned "out of his own mouth," that is, according to the tenor and purport of those very laws and maxims prescribed in that christian faith,

faith, which they themselves have received as of divine and heavenly authoritie, shall “the circumcision” or christians in general, “be justified:” “and the uncircumcision,” that is the unconverted gentiles, “through faith;” upon the very same foundation still, or according to the terms of salvation laid down in the christian system of religion; these being such, as that they may be complied with even by those who are not acquainted with them, as there particularly expressed; they having in effect the very same terms of salvation prescribed to them by another law or system of religion, to wit, that of nature and reason alone. such then was evidently the sentiment of the great christian apostle; that God is “the God” the friend and moral governor “of the gentiles,” as truly and properly, as of the jews or christians. and under the sanction of this so venerable and decisive an authoritie, let us procede to inquire, what means have been by the supreme Deitie in this character afforded them for the knowlege and practice of religion and for the “working out of their own salvation;” that is, in other words, to inquire, what are the doctrines and principles of natural religion. after which we will point out the great usefulness and importance of christianitie even with respect to these very doctrines. what then are the doctrines of natural religion, or the discoveries of the light of nature relative to religion? I apprehend the following particulars to be all of them

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dictates or principles of the religion of nature, and that they constitute or compose the intire system of it. the being, perfections, providence, and moral government of God, all moral obligations whatsoever relative either to God or man, the communication of all those divine influences, that shall be necessarie in order to our discharging these obligations, the terms of reconciliation with our offended creator upon supposition of our having violated and transgressed them, and lastly, a future state of rewards and punishments and the immortalitie of the soul.

First, I say, the being, perfections, providence and moral government of God are the clear and indisputable discoveries or revelations of natural religion. when the heathens called him "the greatest" and the best of beings," which was a character of the sovereign Deitie well-known amongst them, they acknowledged at once his being, his supremacie, his unitie and his goodness. and their sense and apprehension of this last it was customarie to express by inscribing the sentiment on certain utensils set apart for the solemnities and service of a temple. when they asserted, that "all things were full of God," and when they appealed to him by oath, than which nothing was a more common practice amongst them, they acknowledged his universal presence and his heart-searching eye. and by this latter practice, that of religious swearing, as well as by the detestation in which they ever held the sin
of

of perjurie, they acknowleged the supreme Deitie, as a being, who hated falsehood and deceit in his creatures, and who must therefore himself be a God of faithfulness and truth. when they flew to their temples in time of distress, and with that consistent pietie, which I could wish were better known among ourselves, made it as much their practice to resort to them, when they had received any great salvation or deliverance, they acknowleged a divine providence presiding over human affairs and regulating the events of life. nor was any language more common among them, than that by which they denoted their belief in God, and the regard they paid to him, as the avenger of wickedness, the protector, guardian and friend of the good and virtuous. their historie, their writings, their civil policies and laws, their religious rites and ceremonies, their common modes of speech and conversation are all so replete with testimonies in support of these severall reflexions, that to enumerate them would be both superfluous and impossible. since as Dr. Lucas most truly observes, No. 6. of his XII. Sermons, p. 195. “ the notion
“ of an uncontrollable providence universally pos-
“ sessed mankind; sacrifice and prayer humiliation
“ and thanksgiving were as frequent in the pagan,
“ as once in the jewish, or now in the christian
“ world.” I cannot however conclude this particular without specifying in illustration of them that description, which is given by Xenophon of
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the sovereign divinitie. " The eternal God, he
 " says, who beholdeth all things and can do all
 " things, who maintains the order of the universe,
 " so as that it never suffers the least damage or in-
 " jurie, shall be free from all decay, from the least
 " error, blemish, or imperfection, and be such
 " for beautie and magnitude, as by no means to
 " be fully comprehended or explained by us."
 and upon this character or description of the ruling
 and universally presiding mind, he immediately
 founds this dutie or obligation; that " we so re-
 " verence him, as not to do or design any thing
 " that is impious or evil." *Cyropæd.* l. viii.
 juxt. fin.

Secondly, within the compass of natural religion
 are to be included all moral obligations whatsoever,
 relative either to God or man. as this is in the ge-
 neral acknowledged it can be no way necessarie to
 enter into any distinct or ample detail for the proof
 of it. I shall therefore only make a few remarks
 with regard to one or two particular virtues, that
 have been thought scarcely to be known among
 those of the heathen world. some, for instance,
 have seemed to think that forgiveness of injuries is
 a moral dutie peculiar to the gospel. but it is im-
 possible, that it should be so, since there are in
 fact a great varietie of plain and exprefs passages in
 several heathen authors, who wrote before the time
 of our Savior's appearance, some at the distance of
 several hundred years preceding that period, in
 which

which this dutie is explicitly inculcated, and such a temper highly applauded. how finely for example is it expressed by Plato at the end of the Apologie of Socrates. “ I am by no means “angrie,” says the philosopher, “ (ὁ πανυ χαλεπαίνω) “with my enemies, unless it be for thinking, that “they had it in their power to hurt me.” and in his Crito it is in so many words insisted upon in opposition to the too general sentiment or at least perverse inclination of mankind, ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ οἰοῦνται—ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ φασι “ that we are by no means “to do an injurie, no not even in revenge for “having received one.” Vid. Platonis Dial. Forster. p. 139, 40. with Aristotle it is an amiable and a manly character to be “no rememberer of “injuries” μη μνησικακος but εὐκαταλλάκως easily reconcilable and forgiving. Vid. Ethic. Nichom. lib. iv. c. iii. p. 169. Edit. Wilkinson. and Aristotel. Rhetoric. lib. ii. c. iv. §. 14. it is mentioned by Nepos to the honor of Epaminondas, “that he “never remembered an injurie, or an affront.” “nullam adhibuit memoriam contumeliæ.” his character of Atticus has the same eulogium belonging to it. “neque, si quam injuriam acceperat, “non malebat oblivisci quam ulcisci.” “he “never received an injurie, but he chose rather to “forget than to revenge it.” and the very basis and fundamental sentiment in Cicero’s celebrated oration pro Ligario is the excellencie of this virtue; as he himself observes at the begining of it. “om-
“nis

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“nis oratio ad misericordiam tuam conferenda
 “est.” again, it has been said, that humilitie is
 another evangelical dutie, or obligation in morals,
 which the heathens were but little, if at all, ac-
 quainted with. but this I am very certain of that
 they talk much against pride. and it is not easie
 to apprehend, how any one can have the idea of
 pride as a vice, and not of humilitie as a virtue.
 and yet it has been said, that the ancient Greeks
 and Romans had so little knowlege of such a virtue,
 as not even to have a name for it. whereas the
 truth of the matter is, that they had several. and for
 this very reason it is that they have been charged
 with having none. they had not in common any
 single word so comprehensive of the several branches
 of humilitie, as that term itself. but then they
 had different names for these several branches of it;
 all which amounted to what we mean or ought to
 mean by that single and compendious word alone.
 and is it not a mean and little prejudice, not to see
 the thing, merely because it has not in the very
 same mode of expression been denoted? we might
 almost as well say, that they knew nothing of any
 of the other virtues, because they did not speak of
 them in english. I would only add here that Cle-
 mens Alexandrinus in his Stromata lib. ii. p. 418.
 Edit. Paris. observing it to be the doctrine of Plato
 that “the divine likeness in the good man is ac-
 “companied with humilitie” (μετα ταπεινοφροσυνης)
 expressly represents as “commenting” in this doc-
 trine

trine upon that maxim of our Savior; "he that
"humbleth himself shall be exalted." some like-
wise have seemed to imagine, that the ancient hea-
thens had but a very slight and superficial notion
of those moral duties, which have the Deitie for
their immediate object, and which we distinguish
by the name of pietie. but what then meant
their solemn, public, stated and occasional acts of
worship and adoration, gratitude and prayer ad-
dressed to the sovereign mind? how came a viola-
tion of their temples or a profanation of any of
their sacred utensils or rites to be looked upon as
one of the most detestable crimes, that any human
creature could possibly be guiltie of, if a reverence
towards the divinitie had not been thought among
them one of the greatest of obligations? and it
must have been upon the footing of some such sen-
timents as these generally prevailing and deeply
rooted among mankind long before the period of
his own times, that Seneca lays it down as a
maxim, that the virtuous character and that of de-
votion are naturally inseparable. "you will grant,
"says he, that a good man must needs be a man
"of the highest pietie or affection towards the
"Gods." from whence he proceeds very justly to
infer, that "he will be acquiescing with a patient
"and contented mind in whatever happens to him,
"because it is according to that divine order which
"governs in the universe." or take the passage as
it runs in its first and native language, epist. 76.

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p. 228, 9. “virum bonum, concedas necesse est,
 “summæ pietatis” erga Deos esse. itaque quid-
 “quid illi acciderit, æquo animo sustinebit. sciet
 “enim id accidisse lege divina, qua universa pro-
 “cedunt.” and Cicero enumerating the several
 gradations that are to be observed in the system of
 human duties or moral obligations expresses him-
 self thus.---“ut *prima* (scil. officia) Diis immorta-
 “libus; *secunda* patriæ; *tertia* parentibus, dein-
 “ceps gradatim reliquis debeantur.” De Offic.
 lib. i. §. ult. p. 73. and in the same treatise he
 makes it to be one dreadful aggravation of sub-
 verting justice, that thereby we are guiltie of a most
 heinous act of impietie towards the Gods, because
 we do by this means subvert that societie, which
 they have constituted amongst mankind, and which
 is alone to be supported by justice and those accom-
 panying virtues he mentions in the passage I refer
 to. “qua sublata, (scil. communi humani generis
 “societate) beneficentia, liberalitas, bonitas, justitia
 “funditus tollitur, quæ qui tollunt, etiam *adversus*
 “*Deos immortales impii judicandi sunt*; ab eis
 “enim constitutam inter homines societatem ever-
 “tunt.” ibid. lib. iii. §. 6. p. 134, 5. Edit. Tool.
 so well apprised it seems was even this philoso-
 phising heathen of the close and intimate con-
 nexion subsisting between the duties of pietie and
 the obligations of moral virtue, or in other words,
 of that maxim inculcated by the christian apostle,
 “if a man say, I love God and hateth his brother
 “he

“ he is a liar.” but we have one plain and undeniable proof from the gospel itself, that all moral obligations relative both to God and man were deducible from the light of nature and actually in force as the law of nature antecedently to the appearance of our Savior amongst mankind. and it is this. our Savior and his apostles preached repentance, as a dutie of the highest and most essential importance, as including in it the sum and substance of all those moral duties, which they themselves inculcated, and being, as it were, a summarie and compendium of them. they preached it in such a manner, as plainly to shew, that when it accompanied faith in Christ, it was that, which rendered a man every way an acceptable christian, and such a one as God approved. but repentance evidently implies the violation of some law, that had heretofore been in force ; and according to the most genuine and accurate idea of it consists in a return to the discharge of certain obligations, which had formerly been transgressed. with what propriety then could this dutie have been insisted upon in preaching to gentiles, as well as jews, and as containing with respect to both the whole sum and substance of their evangelic duty, if the gentiles, as well as jews had not had a perfect system of moralitie made known to them?

But thirdly another principle of the light of nature is the communication of all those divine influences, that are necessarie in order to our dis-

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charging these obligations of religion and moralitie. this seems to be a sentiment as plainly dictated by natural religion, as even the goodness of God itself. the virtuous qualities and dispositions of the mind are the essential foundation of human happiness. they constitute our chief and highest our only solid and abiding good. were the supreme being therefore to withhold those influences, that are necessarie for the exercise and cultivation of them, with what propriety could we call him good? since this would be in effect to withhold from us our very happiness itself. but the heathens knew more of the benignitie of the sovereign mind, and thought better of him, than to believe any thing of this sort. besides, they believed the realitie of moral obligations. now an obligation in the very nature and idea of it supposes the possibilitie of its being complied with. they must therefore have presumed on the part of Deitie a readines to communicate to the mind of man whatever influences he may for that purpose stand in need of. but some will perhaps allege, that they looked upon man to be very well qualified for the discharge of these duties without any divine influences at all. this however was far from being the case. there is not any notion whatever more frequently to be met with in the writings of the ancient heathens, than the operation of the supreme Deitie on the heart of man, and the necessity of such a divine and heavenly influence, in
order

order to the production of any thing that is great and godlike there. the dedication of temples to particular virtues, a well-known practice among them, is a plain and evident proof, that they looked upon these virtues as subsisting in the human mind to have been derived from above. it is a principle deeply interwoven into the whole system of their mythologie, and constituting one of the most conspicuous branches of it. no courage or magnanimitie in the cause of his friend or country ever warms the hero's breast, no great or arduous enterprise is ever, in these poetic representations, undertaken without the inspiring touch or animating voice of some celestial being.

But, fourthly, another principle, which we mentioned, as being evidently included within the scope of nature's sentiment and doctrine upon the great subject or article of religion, is the method of reconciliation with an offended Deitie upon our having violated and transgressed his laws. nor can any thing be indeed more evident, than that the ancient heathens in general looked upon the supreme Deitie as a being placable and forgiving; since a great number of their religious rites and ceremonies were intended to appease him. but they could not surely be so absurd as to make any attempts towards appeasing a being, whom they believed to be absolutely and in his own essential nature implacable. nay more, they not only attempted to appease the Deitie by these rites and ceremonies, but they believed

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lieved too, that he very frequently was in fact appeased by them and his wrath effectually averted. in laying such a stress upon these external rites and ceremonies they were indeed greatly mistaken; as, alas, are too many christians themselves in the notions which they entertain concerning the method of reconciliation with God their maker. and yet the heathens had those among them, as we have now, who inculcated better sentiments upon the subject. Cicero in his book of offices lays down the following maxim. “pietie and holiness,” I literally translate his words, “will render the Gods propitious, or appeased;” for this last is the expression more exactly corresponding to his original one in the passage referred to; *Deos placatos pietas efficiet & sanctitas.* de offic. lib. ii. p. 79. and Plato in one of his dialogues, viz. de legib. lib. x. expresses himself thus; “I suppose it is by this time sufficiently demonstrated, that there are Gods, and that they preside over the affairs of men; but it is by no means allowable to say, that they are capable of being corrupted by gifts;” that is, by the offerings and sacrifices “of wicked men.” he afterwards proceeds to inquire by what means they are indeed to be appeased, and determines it to be by returning to the real sentiments of justice and pietie. ΦΘΕΙΠΕΙ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἀδικία καὶ ὑβρις μέγα ἀφροσύνης ΣΩΖΕΙ δὲ δίκαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη μετὰ φρονήσεως
 ---With respect to these and other passages of the like kind it is to be remembered, that the Greeks and

and Romans, as well as the Hebrews, used to express the name of Deitie in the singular or plural form indifferently. in innumerable passages of the old testament where we translate the name of God in the singular, it is plural in the original. thus for example were the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis to be translated in the manner usually observed in the version of an ancient heathen author, we must read, “ in the begining *the Gods* created “ the heaven and the earth.” and why should the very same manner of speaking be thought more inconsistent with the divine unitie in one language than in another? Bythner upon this mode of expressing the name of Deitie so common in the hebrew style observes as follows. “ ex consuetudine “ *hujus linguæ ferè semper pluraliter ponitur.* “ (scil. Elohim) *idque ad ejus summam majestatem* “ *& singularem gloriam indicandam.*” vid. Lyra. prophet. p. 21. and why may not the observation be extended somewhat farther? according to the opinion of the very learned Dr. Henry More it must. who in his Antidote against Idolatrie, p. 8, 9. expresses himself thus. “ wherefore to “ use any of the abovesaid modes of worship (viz. “ erecting temples, building altars, &c.) to what “ is inferior to the supreme being, though not as “ to the supreme being, must be idolatrie; or else “ the Roman paganism itself is very rarely, if at “ all, chargeable therewith, they having a notion “ *accurate enough* of the supreme God and *distinct* “ *enough*

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“ *enough* from their other Deities ; so that unless
 “ they chance to worship him in an image they
 “ will seldom be found idolaters, or rather never,
 “ according to the opinion of some, who say,
 “ none that have the knowlege of the one true
 “ God can be capable of idolatrie.” Nay, what
 says Tertullian, when addressing an heathen præses
 or governor ; nos unum Deum colimus, quem
 omnes *naturaliter* nostis, ad *cujus* fulgura & toni-
 trua contremiscitis, ad *cujus* beneficia gaudetis.
Cæteros & ipsi putatis Deos esse, quos nos Dæmonas
 scimus. Ad Scap. init. c. ii. O testimonium! to
 applie to his own evidence so full and authentic in
 the case, the language, which he himself makes
 use of, when speaking elsewhere upon this very
 subject and alleging other proofs of the kind. O
 testimonium animæ *naturaliter* christianæ! Apolo-
 get. c. xvii. p. 52. when he says in the passage
 above, quos *Dæmonas* scimus, he means dead men,
 as is evident from Apol. c. x. where he says, illa
 (*scil.* conscientia vestra) nos judicet, illa nos damnet,
 si poterit negare omnes istos Deos vestros *homines*
 fuisse: which we observe by the way in confirmation
 of what has been already hinted at in reference to the
 heathen idolatrie in the præceding page. vid. seq. c. x.
 Apol. Tertull. & c. xi. But let me not conclude this
 particular without refering to some very just and ex-
 cellent reasoning upon the still more distinct and im-
 mediate subject of it, which occurs in the Posthu-
 mous Sermons of Bishop Conybeare, Vol. ii. Serm.
 iv. p. 136---39.

The last principle, which we mentioned as being contained within the scope and compass of natural religion, was a future state of rewards and punishments and the immortalitie of the soul. that a future state of rewards and punishments in general was the commonly received opinion of the ancient heathens, is undeniably apparent both from their worship, and from their writings, whether historical or philosophic. those among them, philosophers or others, who denied it, never treated it as a novel doctrine, or as the fanciful opinion of this or that particular man, but as a common dogma or article of faith. with respect to their worship in particular, their stated, popular worship, that very superstition and idolatrie, with which it so much abounded, must needs evidently demonstrate their belief of this doctrine. for what was it for the most part, but the worship of dead men? surely then they must suppose these very men to be existing in another state. for I presume there never was an instance of a stupidity so gross, as for any human creature to worship that, which he believed to have no existence at all. and that it was in their opinion to be a state of rewards and punishments, let their poets, and their elysian fields, let the joys of the good and virtuous in a future state, the toils and terrors of the damned, and the solemn judgment, by which the fate of both is decided, all of which were ideas extremely familiar among them, evince. but to the doctrine of a future state in general we

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added,

BOOK I.

added, as another principle of natural religion, the immortalitie of the soul. and is not this equally inferable from the attributes of God as a future state in general? will not God be equally good and benevolent, and equally able to sustain us in being millions of ages hence, as he is at present? will not the argument consequently in favor of a future state be just as conclusive then as now; and so on throughout all eternitie? “it is admirable, says a
 “devout and sensible author, that the reward of
 “our *imperfect* and finite service here, shall be
 “*perfect* and *infinite* glorie hereafter. but it is
 “*impossible* it should be otherwise yet not in respect
 “of *us* or our *desert*, but of *God*, because his
 “*mercy* being boundless and infinite, should else
 “be *terminate*, and God’s greatest *attribute* should
 “suffer.” See a Book intituled, Daily Observations,
 or, Meditations, Divine, Moral. Written by a Person
 of Honour and Piety. Edit. Ann. Dom. 1655. p. 32.
 and to the same purpose it is with the utmost propri-
 etie of sentiment observed by Dr. Lucas. *ibid.*
 Serm. x. p. 306. that “the future happiness of
 “a christian *depends* entirely upon the will of
 “God,” and “that we are not so much in this
 “matter to consider the *meanness* of man, as the
 “*majestie* of God.” and a most charming and
 delightfully forcible illustration of the argument in
 favor of a future state and the immortalitie of the
 soul founded upon the perfections of the sovereign
 mind. the goodness and “love of God” may be
 seen

seen in the same Sermon, p. 307---310. and indeed to this expectation and hope of a future state in particular may most justly be applied what archbishop Leighton observes concerning prayer or the desires of the human soul in general; “all our
“ places of *argument* for our requests are *in* God,
“ none of them in ourselves;” without any exception to be made of that more immediately founded upon the indications of such a state arising from the faculties and powers of the human mind and the moral situation of mankind in the present life. since it is evident that this must ultimately resolve itself into the divine perfections and derive all its force and cogencie from being considered in conjunction with them. “so” that “still” as the good bishop goes on, “the *cause* of his hearing,
“ and the *argument* of our entreating,” supposing this future state to be the wish or topic particularly spoken of, “is in *himself* alone.” and “thus” it is he says, that “a christian” may express “him-
“ self;” and surely with a peculiar propriety in reference to this great and ultimate wish or desire of immortalitie. “Lord I am most unworthie of all
“ those things I request of thee, but, whatsoever I
“ am, thou art a liberal and mightie king, and it
“ is thy glorie to do good *freely*.” see his Select Works, p. 334, 5. and it is language very exactly similar and concurring, which St. Austin had long before made use of, when speaking upon this very topic itself of a future world. “magnum enim

BOOK. I.

“ magna decent, verè, Domine, Deus meus, mag-
 “ nus es tu nimis super omnes Deos, & merces tua
 “ magna nimis. neque enim magnus es tu, &
 “ parva merces tua, sed ut magnus es tu, ita
 “ magna merces tua, quoniam *non aliud* es tu, &
 “ *aliud* merces tua.” Aug. Soliloq. c. xxxvi. p.
 244, 5. ap. Meditat. &c. “ You may consider,”
 says Bishop Patrick in his Advice to a Friend, p.
 45, 6. “ how that excellent princes, when they give
 “ *rewards*, are not wont to have respect so much
 “ to the persons, on whom they are conferred,
 “ (who may be but mean and of low condition) as
 “ to the greatness of their own persons by whom
 “ they are bestowed, whom it does not befit to
 “ give any thing mean and below the name and
 “ authoritie, which they bear. from whence you
 “ may conclude, how inconceivably great that *re-*
 “ *ward* will be, which the majestie of heaven and
 “ earth will honour us withal. if a prince do but
 “ send his charitie to the poor, it is not like one
 “ of us, but like himself; and therefore such will
 “ the favors of God be, which he intends to deal
 “ to all his servants. though they are but servants,
 “ though they are but unprofitable servants, and
 “ have done no more than was their dutie to do,
 “ yet he will reward them like a king, like the
 “ king of all the world, like the blessed and only
 “ potentate, the king of kings and lord of lords,
 “ who only hath immortalitie. he will feast and
 “ entertain them fitably to the excellence of his
 “ own

“ own infinite majestie, and not proportionably
“ to the povertie of their persons or of their de-
“ ferts.” compare likewise p. 42. §. 4. where you
have a particular sentiment insisted upon in illustration of this general reasoning very much co-incident with what will be found occurring in the passage of Dr. Lucas referred to above. and that upon some such reasonings as these the immortalitie of the soul, as well as a future state in general, had become the doctrine and belief of the ancient heathens, is plain from their not limiting the continuance of our being in that future state to any particular period. this shews, that they had no other idea or notion upon the subject, than of its perpetual duration. and this is what the expressions and manner of language they make use of in relation to it naturally import. Plato indeed in his celebrated dialogue upon the soul divides the spirits of men departed into three classes. those of one sort he supposes to enter immediately on their quitting this world into the happiness of a celestial one. those of another he considers as being assigned to some degree of punishment in the other world, in order to their being healed of some corruptions, which they had contracted here, that after a certain period of duration passed this restoration of their natures will be effected; and that then they will be associated with the former. the third class he supposes to go into a future world so deeply tainted with vice and immorality, as to be absolutely

absolutely incurable. and with respect to these last his conclusion is that they will be annihilated; for so perhaps we are to understand “ their being “ plunged into Tartarus, to go no more out.” but this in the strongest manner implies his belief, that the souls belonging to the two former classes would be strictly immortal. and it is with strange inconsistency, that he should think any otherways of these, or have made more than two. or if we interpret the expression referred to of eternal misery and punishment, he could not surely have supposed a less durable state of happiness allotted for the virtuous and good. or lastly should we understand the terms *ἀνιάτως* and *οὐδεν ἔτι οὐκ ἐκβαίνουσιν* as denoting only the very long duration that should pass before the renovation of these more enormous sinners should be effected, this must surely have been, in his opinion, in order to their advancement into the abodes and mansions of the blessed. and we can scarcely imagin it to have been his belief, that after such a discipline undergone, such an effect and happy change produced, all was at length to terminate in the utter extinction of their being. upon the whole however we may observe with how much propriety it was asserted by Mr. Baxter, that “ as we see it, (viz. the doctrine of a future state,) by “ reason; so by certain experience, that this is discernable by the *light of nature*; for all the “ world, or almost all, do believe it. even those “ nations, where the gospel never came, and have “ nothing

“ nothing but what they have by nature, even the
 “ most barbarous *Indians* acknowlege some life
 “ after this, and a difference of men, according
 “ as they are here.” See his Sermon on Judgment,
 ap. Works, Vol. iv. p. 792. and to the same pur-
 pose he says, Dying Thoughts, p. 33. “ that holy
 “ souls shall be hereafter happie, seems to be one
 “ of the common notices of *nature* planted in the
 “ consciences of mankind. and it is therefore ac-
 “ knowleged by the generalitie of the world, that
 “ freely use their understandings. most, yea almost
 “ all, the heathen nations at this day believe it, be-
 “ sides the mahometans.” it is with pleasure too I
 find the Lady Brooke upon this head theologizing
 so justly. “ it is most certain,” she observes,
 “ there is a life of glory. not only the scriptures
 “ assert it, but it is also one of the *principles* of
 “ natural divinity. we have *these* things in the
 “ *heathens creed*; that there is a God; that the
 “ soul of man is *immortal*; and that there will be
 “ *rewards* and *punishments* in a life to come.” See
 observations and experiences annexed to her life,
 p. 107. and having thus pointed out what we
 apprehend to be the doctrines of natural religion,
 and to have been in fact embraced by those, who
 enjoyed no other light than that of nature,

We go on in the second place to shew the vast
 importance of christianitie even with respect to these
 very doctrines. Now next to the belief of them
 there is nothing in relation to them, that can be of

BOOK I.

greater importance, than their being made the object of our diligent, serious and impartial attention. nay, without this the mere belief of them can be of little or no signification to us. it is by this means only that the knowlege of them in their puritie and simplicitie can be preserved, or their moral influence upon the heart and temper secured. and it was for want of this one thing only, and not through ignorance of the doctrines themselves, that the heathen world became so idolatrous in their worship and in their practice so immoral. and is there any thing to be imagined, that could have been better calculated for exciting mens attention to these momentous subjects and to awaken their minds into the most deliberate consideration of them, than the miracles by which the gospel was introduced, propagated and established amongst mankind? in the very nature of them as extraordinary events only they have this tendencie; but abundantly the more so, when we recollect, and scarcely can we avoid the reflexion, when contemplating these miracles, that this mode of exciting attention is a method pursued by the immediate counsels of heaven for that very end. they are consequently a declaration of the importance of these doctrines in the judgment and estimation of infallible wisdom. they are likewise a call given us to attend to them by the voice of goodness itself. and how strong and powerful the motive arising from such declarations thus explicitly and solemnly

solemnly on the part of heaven renewed, from this repeated call to make them the subject of our most serious and thoughtful consideration?

Again, since we cannot but look upon this extraordinary method of exciting mens attention to these doctrines to be, as we have said, a method pursued in the immediate counsels of heaven for that end, these miracles are an additional attestation to the truth of them in all their genuin meaning and simplicitie. an attestation of such considerable force and carrying in it so high a degree of evidence, as that by it alone the peculiarities of the gospel have been very sufficiently proved. how great then must be the accession of evidence arising from it in favor of these other doctrines of original revelation? and how welcome such an additional satisfaction given to our minds upon subjects so very interesting and momentous, subjects of such high and infinite concern with respect to our everlasting welfare; as the perfections of Deitie, the pardon of sin, the immortalitie of our existence? how comfortable, how joyful the consideration, that in attestation of these doctrines heaven itself has declared by the most illustrious "signs and wonders of the "Holie Ghost" exciting mens attention to them, and enabling the apostles to propagate and diffuse the light and knowlege of the gospel containing these principles in all their native and uncorrupted truth, amidst such difficulties and opposition as must otherwise have been totally insurmountable?

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Farther thirdly with respect to that great doctrine in particular of natural religion, the doctrine of a future state, there is something in the manner of publishing the gospel to the world, and in the peculiar nature of those miraculous attestations, which accompanied it, that greatly recommends and enforces the belief of such a doctrine. the external evidences of christianitie have been in the benignitie and wisdom of divine providence so contrived, as to be strongly confirmatorie of this particular principle entering so essentially into the constitution and design of it, as well as in the highest degree satisfactory and convincing as to its general credit and truth. our Savior's own resurrection, as well as that of others summoned into life again, was a sensible proof, an ocular demonstration, an evidence in fact of the possibilitie of existing beyond the grave; and by giving us so full and decisive an idea of it's possibilitie must be allowed greatly to strengthen and corroborate every argument insisted upon for evincing it's realitie. if our Savior and the persons, whom either he himself or his apostles raised to life, had not given very sufficient proof of their being the very persons said to be raised, by notice taken of the former actions of their lives and by expressing a consciousness of them as done by themselves, scarcely would the miracle have gained any credit. it would in this case have been urged, that there was no true or real restoration to life; but that the similar person of some one, who had
never

never been dead, a partner in the cheat, had been substituted in the room of him said to be summoned into life after having been actually deceased. and, though this ocular proof has never been given to us, it must needs be no small or inconsiderable addition to the evidence of our religious and christian faith, to know by credible testimonie, that it has to others been exhibited and vouchsafed.

We might remark likewise that several of the doctrines before-mentioned as branches of natural religion are also evidently resulting from some of the peculiar principles and discoveries of the gospel. these therefore under the sanction of it's general evidence are so many confirming testimonies in favor of them. but this we hope will appear in the prosecution of the work before us and in treating at large upon the several peculiarities refered to.

I shall therefore only add at present, that even with respect to the being of a God, though it cannot be strictly proved by the testimonie of miracles, yet they are of the same importance towards exciting our attention to this as to any other truth. and momentous as it is, we may perhaps stand as much in need of having our thoughts awakened into a consideration of this principle of religion as of any one besides. nay, considering it's infinitely greater consequence, indeed infinitely more. and what now can more naturally or more powerfully remind us of a Deitie, of a sovereign Lord and ruler in nature, than the seeing nature thus won-

derfully acted upon, and, as it were turned out of her usual course? how directly are we led by observing this into the inquiry; whence proceeds her wonted regularitie and order? how comes it to pass that these surprizing changes have not happened oftner? or how that, when actually occuring, it should be in connexion with so admirable a doctrine; a doctrine so friendly to man, so promotive of virtue, and of every thing that can be conducing to the good of societie and the dignitie of our immortal being, and in such direct confirmation of it? in this view do not even these inversions of nature's order bear the same general stamp of beautie, utilitie and benevolent design, as even that order itself? and thus do they not amount to a distinct, additional proof at least, and that no slight or inconsiderable one, of a benevolent and most wisely contriving mind that governs all? and by a train of reflexions like these, could we suppose any one to have been before fluctuating in his belief upon this all-concerning article, might he not be led into a full perswasion of it's truth?

And now upon the whole, what a firm and ample foundation have we in the sentiments, which it has been the design of this chapter to illustrate, for the devoutest praises and thanksgivings to the sovereign and almightie ruler, not on our own account only, but in behalf likewise of the whole human kind! a man of generous temper and affections would almost grudge himself the advantages

tages of the christian revelation, and well nigh blush to enjoy them, were he to believe, that so great a part of mankind, as that, which has been and still is destitute of these advantages, should for want of them have undergone the sad necessitie, and be still subjected to it, of quitting this life altogether unprepared and disqualified for the felicities and glories of a better. but, as the case in the real truth of it so fully admits, while we offer up our most affectionate praises to God for those peculiar and inestimable blessings of the gospel, which we ourselves enjoy, we may present at the same time before that awful seat of majestie, whence beams with such refulgent rays his unconfined and universal goodness, our social thanksgivings on account of those discoveries so clear and intelligible, which he has made of his perfections and of his will even to those, who are destitute of this peculiar light; discoveries abundantly sufficing for their guidance in that path, which is assuredly in the case of every one, that is with a persevering zeal and ardor pursuing it, to terminate in heavenly and immortal blifs, whenever the pilgrimage here on earth shall expire. it has been said indeed, that the dictates and discoveries of the light of nature upon the subject of religion were in one most material point defective; and that is, that they carried along with them no authoritie, by which they might be enforced upon the consciences and effectually recommended to the choice and approbation of mankind.

but

but they had the authoritie of reason and nature. and the gospel itself has no more. into this at last must all it's evidences be resolved. for what other account is to be given of our belief of it; than that on the footing of it's historical credibilitie, it's internal excellencie, it's miraculous attestations, it is *reasonable* and *natural* that we should believe it? or, if authoritie can be derived only from miracles, then all human laws and constitutions must be absolutely without it; and thus the very foundations of civil polity and order subverted. and though, if the supposition be indeed just and defensible, we must upon admitting it allow, that the heathen world were without a law in morals and religion, yet what upon this concession will become of the apostle's assertion, who expressly declares, that "they were a law unto themselves," meaning undoubtedly, that in relation to these the genuine dictates of nature and reason carried in them the authoritie of God and were to be considered as constituting a divine law and revelation?

How inexcusable then will it be in us of the christian name and profession, not to be found acting in a manner agreeable to those principles and duties, which have thus by the conspiring voice of nature and christianitie been recommended to our most serious regards! if the heathens themselves, those very heathens, whom we are so much apt to despise on account of their unacquaintedness with the gospel-scheme, will, as the apostle declares they will

will, be hereafter “without excuse,” because, tho’ they “*knew* God,” “knew” him in his nature and attributes, “knew” him in his laws, “knew” him in his rewards and punishments both present and future, “they did not worship him as God, neither “were thankful;” what apologie, let it be well and deeply considered, shall we christians have to make, if we do not so much as appear to “worship” God at all, or do it in form only, or not with that life and ardor of affection, with which alone as God, as the greatest, the best, the most lovely and adorable of all beings, he can be worthily recognised? if it could be justly said by an apostle of Christ, “behold, thou art called a jew, and “retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God; “and knowest his will, and approvest the things, “that are more excellent, being instructed out of “the law---thou therefore, that makest thy boast of “the law, through breaking the law dishonorest “thou God;” what think you will be said to us; to us by the great and sovereign judge himself, if, notwithstanding all our more eminent advantages for religious knowlege and moral improvement, “through breaking the laws” of righteousness and mercie *we* “dishonor,” and cause his name to be blasphemed? nay, it is scarcely possible, that in us even a languishing and partial goodness should be without this effect, as it cannot be without a dreadful aggravation arising from such peculiar privileges.

C H A P. II.

On the mosaic institution.

BOOK I.

THE propriety of insisting upon a few considerations relative to the mosaic system or institution of religion, in order to a just and regular prosecution of our present undertaking, has been already hinted at, and must upon a little reflexion be sufficiently apparent. for how shall we be able to ascertain the real and strict peculiarities themselves of the gospel-dispensation, or to point out the distinct, and special uses to which they are adapted, or to assign the particular and additional advantages arising from this dispensation even with respect to those doctrines and principles that are not peculiar to it, without some such previous consideration had of the nature, tendency and design of any religious dispensation, that was prior to it? for this reason we have in the preceding chapter proposed our sentiments upon the subject of natural revelation; and shall now with the same view proceed to some observations upon the institution or religious system of Moses. for which however there is yet another reason to be alleged. the

gospel not only supposes the realitie of natural religion, but asserts likewise the authoritie and divine legation of Moses as a religious institutor and guide. to his character however considered in this light many things have been objected; for all which christianitie by avowing his prophetic claim has become responsible. and should there be any thing in his institution of religion occuring by which the divine attributes and perfections are debased, or the original principles and obligations of religion as founded in reason and the moral constitution of the human mind impaired; the honor of christianitie itself must be proportionably affected by it, and every argument insisted upon in it's favor to a certain corresponding degree invalidated. but whether this be indeed the case a reflexion or two upon the following particulars may perhaps suffice to determine; the immediate nature and tendencie, for instance, of the mosaic institution relative to religion simply and in itself considered, the manner in which it was originally enforced, and the advantages that are now to be derived from it in stating the evidences and illustrating the argument in proof of christianitie.

First, I say, let us consider in this view the immediate nature and tendencie of the mosaic institution, so far we mean as religion has been the object of it. it cannot be doubted by any one, but that right notions concerning God and that worship, which is essentially owing to him from the subjects

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of

of his moral government, must needs be of the highest moment towards their attaining the supreme end and true perfection of their being. but what in this respect could have been more pernicious or corruptive, than the idolatrie of the ancient heathen world, the "worshipping the creature more than the creator, who is God blessed," and to be with devouteſt affections adored "for evermore." yet to this idolatrie were the jews themselves ſo extremely prone, as from their hiftorie appears, that according to all human probabilitie, it was only by ſome ſpecial means deſigned and miraculoſly inſtituted for that very purpoſe, that they could ever have been reſtrained from falling into it; or even from becoming of all other nations the moſt ſtupidly and inordinately attached to it. now this was the direct tendencie of their own appointed ritual. it was "a wall of partition" between them and the gentile world; a national peculiaritie ſtamped upon them by the divine hand, which tended to engage all their national prejudices on the ſide of a purer worſhip; and not only ſo, but to excite in their minds the greateſt abhorrence of the ſurrounding idolatrie, heaven itſelf having in a manner ſo ſolemn and explicit declared againſt it. and by this means it was actually effected, that, when our Savior and his apoſtles appeared calling upon men to renounce their dumb and ſenſeleſs idols and to addiſt themſelves to the pure and ſpiritual worſhip of the one living and eternal God, and
with

with the great design of enforcing universally the duties of pietie and religion, they found the whole nation of the jews happily distinguished in this respect from all the kingdoms of the earth by not having the least footstep of idolatrie among them. consequently all those prejudices arising from it, which occasioned so fierce and cruel and long continued an opposition to the gospel in other parts of the world, were in their case already obviated. thus excellent in it's most immediate tendencie and effects was the mosaic institution as a discipline preparatorie for the reception of that gospel, the grand and ultimate aim of which was to "bring us to " God," to deliver us from the power and dominion of those sinful affections, which necessarily alienate and estrange us from him, and not only to promote amongst mankind the " worship of the " soveraign and eternal Deitie in spirit and in " truth," but even to render us in our own temper and disposition " partakers of the divine nature," and thus to advance us to an eternal union with him in the heavenly felicitie and highest enjoyment of his complacencie and love. and then farther, though the ceremonial law of the jews might justly enough, as it was by St. Peter, be called an heavie and almost intolerable " yoke," on account of the multiplicitie of it's rites, and the minute and scrupulous exactness, with which the observance of them was enjoined, yet from this very circumstance some happie consequences might

with respect to their national character and public manners ensue. by this means their attention was so much engaged and their time employed and occupied, as to afford them but little leisure in comparison for entering upon any vicious pursuits. and in consequence of such a diversion the most fatal enormities might in many particular instances be happily prevented, and the national character upon the whole preserved much more pure and uncorrupt, and thus a better disposition for the reception of the gospel, that doctrine so eminently styled "a doctrine according to godliness," secured, than if the libertie and occasion for sinful indulgences had not been in this especial manner restrained; besides those immediate benefits all the while, and for so long a succession of years, accruing. and as the whole of their ritual had been miraculously and by the special authoritie of heaven itself appointed for their observance, the constant engagement of their minds and direction of their actions in this way would naturally tend to create such a sense and reverence of the divine authoritie, as might be very easily and happily, and no doubt in a great variety of instances really was, transfered to matters of higher moment, even to those essential and infinitely important duties of "loving the Lord our God with all the heart and soul and mind and might and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves." and this the more, as many of their rites and ceremonies were naturally representative or typical

typical of the moral species. thus their various purifications and ablutions or washings could scarcely fail of reminding those of them, that were in any degree disposed to seriousness and piety, of that much more important purity of heart and temper, which was requisite in order to their finding favor and acceptance in the sight of God. and that something of this kind they were indeed productive of is evident from the style and language of the old testament, in which we find in fact such an application to be made of them. "purge me," says the psalmist, "with hyssop," alluding to the ceremonies of their law, but speaking in reality of the purity of the mind and heart; "purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "wash you," says the prophet, "make you clean, and put away the evil of your doings." in like manner the frequent sacrifices, which they were obliged to offer up, and the very exact and scrupulous punctuality they were to observe both as to the peculiar species of animals appropriated to such an use, and the perfection in its kind of the particular animal itself by each one selected for that purpose, could not fail as we may well nigh imagine, to put them upon recollecting that absolute surrender and dedication, that was to be made of themselves, of their hearts, their views, their affections and all their powers to the will and service of the living and eternal God. and that this was in reality the effect of

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of them appears likewise from the style and language of the sacred old testament-writings. "the sacrifices of God," says the psalmist in the same penitential hymn referred to above, the sacrifices most pleasing and acceptable in his sight, "are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." this too is the proper emphasis of an expression we meet with in the psalm immediately preceding. in it the divine and sovereign being himself is represented as saying, "who so offereth praise, glorifieth me." the psalmist had before been speaking in comparative contempt of mere external sacrifices and oblations, and representing them, when unaccompanied with an inwardly devout and holie meaning, as being in no sort or in any degree acceptable to the almighty. he then adds by way of contrast, and distinctly specifying the superior, noblest sacrifice; "offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows," the sincerest devotion of the very heart itself, "unto God." and then, that he might clothe the sentiment in all the highest majestie of religion, and inculcate it in it's utmost energie and force, he supposes the great, eternal Deitie himself, to assume the subject, and as it were in person to give this solemn assurance, who so "offereth praise, glorifieth me." in both these passages the word we render "offer" and "offering" is exactly sacrificial; זָבַח, and it is accordingly rendered by Junius and Tremellius and in the version of Pagninus qui sacrificat laudem; and

and by the septuagint *Θυσια αἰνέσεως*. and “ whofo *offereth* praise,” is language according to the strictest signification and import of the original terms denoting, “ whofo *sacrifices*, or brings the “ *sacrifice* of praise, or offers up the praise and “ gratitude of the heart in *sacrifice*.” and of such a one it is said, that he “ glorifieth God,” pays him the worthiest and most acceptable homage. and as immediately follows, “ to him, that ordereth “ his conversation aright and thus “ presents him- “ self a living sacrifice” “ to God, will he shew “ his salvation.” upon the same allusion is founded the language of the prophet, speaking likewise as in the name of God ; “ if ye offer the “ blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer “ the lame and sick, is it not evil?” and in proportion to that degree of clearness and precision, with which any one among the jews was enabled to understand for himself the predictions of the Messiah, who is expressly spoken of in their prophecies, as that great deliverer, “ whose soul “ should be made an offering for sin;” *an offering for sin*, the very same word in the original, for a single word it is there, which is in other passages of the old testament rendered a “ trespass-offer- “ ing;” and whose great commission it would be “ to finish transgression, and to make an end of “ sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquitie and “ to be cut off, but not for himself;” in proportion, I say, to everie ones insight into the true meaning

meaning of these predictions, would they be naturally inclined to look upon their own sacrifices as typical and significative of this great oblation. and by this means a proper disposition might be kept up amongst them for the reception of the Messiah, and be successively transmitted to that very period, when the weeks of Daniel being accomplished, he should in fact appear, "to be the salvation and the glorie of all the ends of the earth."

But these are reflexions, by which we are naturally led to the second particular we mentioned, as what we might with the greatest propriety advert to, in order to our intended illustration of the present topic. and that is, the manner in which the mosaic institution was enforced. and this was, by the sanction of miracles and the consolations of prophesie. considering how extremely burdensome and expensive were the rites of judaism, it is scarce to be imagined, that the jewish people could by any means have been persuaded in their national character, and for so long a series of generations, to have submitted to them, had they not been perfectly well satisfied, and upon the most convincing and solid reasons, of a divine authority enacting them. but this was a conviction to be founded only on miracles. and accordingly we find, that at the first institution of it mightie signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of Moses and Aaron; and not only so, but that these original
sanctions

sanctions of it were ever and anon enforced in succeeding times by the miraculous performances of other prophets, as well as by such miracles as were sometimes exhibited by the hand of providence among them in a manner independent of human agency. and what now can be more evident, than that a people already accustomed to the faith of miracles, and thus fully convinced, that miracles, real miracles had been once performed in confirmation of a religious dispensation, must on this account have been so much the better prepared for the reception of the gospel, which was to be upon this footing proposed to the acceptance of the world and established amongst mankind? agreeably to this observation we find, that at the time of it's publication, far from insisting upon the impossibilitie or incredibilitie of miracles, they "sought after a sign." this objection indeed of the impossibilitie of miracles, or at least extreme incredibilitie with whatever circumstances attended, is wholly peculiar to our modern times. the ancient heathens, however they might object to them in this or that particular manner circumstanced, were so far from imagining them to be impossible, that there are frequent accounts of them to be met with in their histories. and certainly there cannot be a more absurd or ridiculous conceit, than that of supposing the Deitie, by whom the laws of nature were at first established, and by whose energie alone they subsist, should not be able, whenever he

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thinks

thinks proper, to suspend or to controule them. in this respect however the jews had vastly the advantage over the gentile world, since, though neither jew nor gentile would pretend to deny the possibilitie of miraculous works, the jews had besides upon the footing of miracles actually performed, and upon that footing alone, already owned the authoritie, and submitted themselves to the institution, of Moses. But, as this institution had been thus enforced upon the observers of it by the sanction of miracles, so their minds could not but be greatly reconciled to the burden of that peculiar ritual, which it enjoined, by the prospect of that happie æra, when a more sublime and “glorious” dispensation of religion was to commence. Abraham foresaw this “day” and foreseeing it “was glad.” and for the same general reason other benevolent and pious jews must both have foreseen and made it too the matter of their joy. and as the prophecies exhibiting this welcome prospect had been the comfort of their ancestors, so the thoughtful and considerate among them of our Savior’s time could not but discern in his person, character and offices, at least some very fair and pleasing appearances of their accomplishment; by which they would naturally be excited to a more exact and punctual examination of his claims.

But here a question occurs. if the mosaic dispensation was indeed thus wisely adapted to prepare

pare those of the jewish nation for the reception of the gospel, how came it to pass, that so few in comparison of the jews did in fact receive it, and that it generally met with a better welcome among the gentiles? to this there are several things to be suggested in answer. it is in the first place undeniable, that a great number of jews not only in Judea, but in those other countries, where they had been scattered abroad, were actually converted. and to this event we cannot but conclude those previous steps of divine providence, which we have been now briefly recollecting to have conducted; especially when we consider, secondly, that, notwithstanding all the obstinacie and perverseness of the jews and their disposition to idolatrie, they were in fact, according to what we have been insisting on, distinguished among all the nations and kingdoms of the world by their freedom from it. this very end, their freedom, namely, from idolatrie, it was the principal design of the mosaic law of ceremonies to accomplish. and we see it to have been so far the actual effect of that institution, as to have been the clear, indisputable distinction of them as a people from the very time of it's establishment to the days of our Savior. can we then justly say, that it was without effect; or that effects of the most valuable and important nature did not accrue from it; be it's immediate influence in relation to their reception of the gospel supposed more or less? it is however to be remem-

bered in the third place and with respect to those among the jews, who either in our Savior's time, did, notwithstanding this preparatorie discipline, reject the proposals of the gospel, or who in any preceding period had turned aside to idolatrie, that iniquitie and corruption of temper will prevent the salutarie influence of the best and in themselves most efficacious means of religion, that imagination can form any idea of. witness the sad degeneracie of the christian world amidst such eminent privileges tending so directly and with so much admirable force and energie of moral and divine persuation to make "the man of God," the serious and truly devout professor of religion, "perfect in every good work."

But we proposed in farther confirmation of the excellencie and utilitie of the mosaic institution to point out the advantages, that are even now to be derived from it with respect to the proof and evidence of christianity itself. we have seen it to have been in it's original tendencie and design admirably well fitted as a preparatorie discipline for disposing the jewish nation to the reception of the gospel. and we have the greatest reason for believing from what has been the actual event, that a very extensive and important efficacie of this kind was the result of it. here then is a connexion, an unitie of design apparent in the dispensations of Moses and of Christ, which must needs carrie in it a very natural presumption in favor of both. it exhibits to

us the view of a regular and orderly scheme in the conduct of divine providence analogous to those works of nature, which are the indisputable operations of a sovereign deitie. it is therefore with a fair and natural probabilitie, that we ascribe them in this connected view to the same divine agencie and intention which formed and continually supports this grand providential plan, and consider them as designed by an incorporation and essential union with it to co-operate towards the same ultimate views. again, those prophecies so admirably adapted for ministering comfort upon the most enlarged and generous principles to the ancient jews under the burden of that peculiar ritual, their strictest observance of which had been by the most sacred sanctions inculcated, we can actually discern to have had their accomplishment in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. they are therefore to us so many distinct evidences in favor of the christian institution, and in their conspiring force must needs constitute an additional scene of argument of the highest energie and importance in evincing it's authoritie. and as these prophecies were pronounced and delivered either by the very person himself, who established the jewish dispensation by miracles, or at least by those, who acted in a professed subserviencie to his views, and under the general sanction of his mission ever and anon enforced by some repeted miracle or sign, these mosaic miracles may with equal proprietic be considered

sidered as bearing testimonie to the christian religion, the divine authoritie of which is in these prophecies asserted, as even to the dispensation of Moses. and by this means the general evidence of miracles in favor of christianitie is not a little heightened and enlarged. such then were the uses of the mosaic institution. it was a preservative against idolatrie. the ritual it prescribed was a standing typical memento of moral truths and obligations, which was a manner of instruction peculiarly well-futed to the taste and disposition of the jews; add too, that it was naturally preventive of vice and wickedness by occupying so much of their time and thoughts. and on all these accounts, as well as by it's accompanying sanctions of miracle and prophecie, it has operated, in very happie subserviencie to the promulgation and establishment of the gospel, and still continues to carry in it a very important efficacie of this kind. and let it be well remembered, that so far as the mosaic institution tended to facilitate the reception, and appears to strengthen the evidence in favor of, christianitie, it is to be looked upon as calculated for the universal use and benefit of mankind, and to be esteemed alike the blessing both of jew and gentile. I would not however be thought by any observations of this nature to insinuate, that the evidences of the gospel may not be very sufficiently established independently of Moses and the old testament. and were I to be employed as a
missionarie

missionarie among the savage Indians, as we call them, though God's rational and immortal creatures as well as we. and I could give some reasons for their calling us savage in their turn, as no doubt they do; but I say, that were I to be employed among them as a missionarie, I would never say a word to them concerning the jewish religion, till I had first convinced them of the truth of christianitie upon the footing of it's own separate and independent evidences. upon this footing to be sure great numbers of the first profelytes of the gospel must have been induced to the acknowledgement and reception of it. a noble accession of evidence, as we have seen, is however arising from the dispensation of Moses to the truth of christianitie, though it cannot properly be considered as having a strictly necessary connexion with it's defence.

“ But if the ministration of death written and
“ engraven in stones was glorious, so that the chil-
“ dren of Israel could not stedfastly behold the
“ face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance,
“ which glorie was to be done away; how shall
“ not the ministration of the spirit be rather glo-
“ rious?” this superior excellence of the gospel-
dispensation, when compared with that of Moses,
will, as we hope, in the amplest manner appear,
upon a due consideration of the several particulars,
that are in the prosecution of our present design to
be enlarged upon. some general reflexions how-
ever, in illustration of the topic, will here be na-
turally

turally suggested. and, as the apostle has in the chapter, where the words just now cited are occurring, professedly insisted upon this very comparison in the same general view of it, what can we do less than to accept of him for our guide? in the first place then the law of Moses is there, as we may see, called "the ministration of death." the meaning of which I apprehend to be, that it's precepts were chiefly relative to the concerns and objects of this perishing and mortal life, and consequently not so favorable or friendly to man in his highest interests, nor so well adapted to enliven and invigorate the principles of piety and goodness in the soul, the immortal part, as is the system of the gospel. for which reason the latter is spoken of in the verse immediately preceding, and by way of distinction too, as here, from the law of Moses, as being "spirit." "the letter," says the apostle there, "killeth, but the spirit giveth life." the law of Moses, part of which was literally "engraven upon stones," a circumstance hinted at by our apostle himself, as will be seen anon, in stating this comparison; the law of Moses, I say, abounding so much in ceremonial observances, might, as the historie itself of the jewish people abundantly evinces, be so perverted and abused, as instead of adding any thing to the energie or force of moral precepts, greatly to diminish and impair it. whereas the gospel through it's freedom from ceremonial observances so much incapable

capable of this abuse, and containing in it's grand design and ultimate views a spiritual reference uncontrolled by any mixtures of this kind, must needs, in the very nature of it, be far better calculated for quickening and exalting in our souls that divine image, in which consists the "life," or only true and genuin happiness of man. in the peculiarities of the mosaic dispensation there was scarcely any thing, that was immediately adapted to operate upon the nobler and more generous affections of the human mind. whereas in the gospel every thing is primarily directed thither. the gospel may likewise with the greatest propriety be styled "the spirit," as it's fundamental principles and laws have been so deeply engraven upon the very heart of man. whereas the law of Moses, so far as relates to those external rites and ceremonies, the appointment and enumeration of which are known to constitute so capital and distinguishing a part of it, could only be engraven upon stones, or some other sensible materials. in this interpretation we are authorised by the apostle himself and by what he has in this very chapter insisted on. "ye," says he to these corinthian converts, "are our epistle;" your faith and piety, your love and zeal we look upon as far more honorable to ourselves, than could have been any mere epistolary recommendations whatsoever. "ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch, as ye are manifestly declared to

I " be

“ be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written
 “ not with ink, but with the spirit of the living
 “ God; not on tables of stone, but in fleshly
 “ tables of the heart.” for these reasons it is,
 that the gospel, by way of contra-distinction from
 the law of Moses, and as expressive of it's superior
 excellence, is called “ the spirit.” and with the
 same general reference and intention undoubtedly
 it is, that the apostle speaks of it in this chapter
 as being “ the ministration of the spirit.” in
 this latter expression however we may well presume
 a yet farther reference intended to those miracles,
 by which the gospel has been so gloriously attested
 and made to spread it's benign and salutarie in-
 fluences throughout the world, so far transcending
 any thing of the kind, that had ever appeared in
 connexion with the mosaic dispensation, and in the
 scriptures of the new testament, constantly ascribed
 to a ministration or agencie of “ the holie spirit.”
 again, in the ninth verse of this chapter, the law
 of Moses is spoken of as being “ the ministration
 “ of condemnation.” whereas the gospel is there
 styled “ the ministration of righteousness,” or, ac-
 cording to the very frequent meaning of this term
 in the sacred writings, of mercie. the law of
 Moses, it is well known by all, subjected those,
 who lived under the authoritie of it, to a varietie
 of penalties and methods of reconciliation or ac-
 quital on account of the violation, which they were
 almost perpetually falling into, of some or other
 of

of those ceremonial observances, with which it so much abounded. in the enumeration of these penalties and modes of remission, a great part of the mosaic institution consists. so that the argument of this ninth verse naturally runs thus. "if the "ministration of condemnation," that ministration, which exposed those, who lived under it to "condemnation," and so many troublesome penalties, on account of ceremonial guilt contracted, "be glorie," much more must that "ministration" of the gospel, which releases them from all such injunctions, and consequently from the danger of incurring any such penalties or condemnation, "exceed in glorie." the gospel may likewise be called "the ministration of righteousness" or mercie, in contradistinction from the law of Moses for a much more extensive and important reason. it contains the clearest and most ample assurances of the divine forgiveness, to be extended to all the truly penitent. the miracles accompanying and certifying these assurances are far superior to those, by which the mosaic institution had been authenticated. it must therefore be considered as far "exceeding" the law of Moses, in this so deeply concerning and important article. not that those living under this latter dispensation were by any means destitute of hope or comfort in relation to it. besides what the reasoning of their own minds would so naturally suggest, and which they would to be sure consider their own institution of

religion as designed in the general idea of it to corroborate; their lawgiver himself had moreover in most explicit terms declared "the Lord," the supreme Jehovah, "to be the Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquitie, transgression and sin." and accordingly it is laid down by Solomon, as an undoubted truth, that "whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercie." and it is the joyful declaration made by the prophet Isaiah, "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercie upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." an almost endless varietie of passages to the same purpose might out of the jewish scriptures be alleged. the law of Moses then could not by our apostle be called "the ministration of condemnation," on account of it's exhibiting no assurances of mercie in favor of penitents. it must therefore be called so for those other reasons that have just now been assigned.

Fourthly, the law of Moses and the christian religion differ according to the doctrine of the apostle in this chapter, as to the time or period during which they were to continue in force. "for if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious," "that which remaineth," or rather, "that which is permanent and lasting." the gospel, at the
time

time of the apostle's addressing this epistle to the
corinthians, was a new institution, and therefore
could not with propriety be spoken of as a thing
remaining. but in this expression he designed to
point it out as one distinguishing characteristic of
christianity, that it was intended to continue in
force much longer than the law of Moses. where-
as this latter was designed, even in its original in-
stitution, for a temporary only, and transient use. it
was the gracious purpose of heaven, that the gospel
should be in its influences and operation abiding and
perpetual. such is evidently the meaning of the
apostle in these words. and it is a meaning agree-
able to many other passages of the new testament,
all importing, that christianity was far from being
intended for the use only of those to whom it was
at first promulgated, or at most in conjunction with
an age or two succeeding. in the very nature and
genius of it, it is calculated for perpetual use.
and accordingly it was declared by those, who first
published it to the world, to be a religion, that was
to subsist to the end of time. "go," says our
Savior himself, to his apostles, "and teach all na-
tions, baptizing them in the name of the father,
of the son, and of the holy ghost: and lo I
am with you alway, even to the end of the
world." of this last expression indeed an
interpretation has been given, which, if allowed,
must render our intended argument from this de-
claration wholly inconclusive. it has been said,
that

that the original words here rendered “to the end of the world,” may signifie only “to the end of the age,” that present, apostolic period or age of miracles. but by this means the promise will, I fear, become very frivolous and insipid. “lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” is a declaration that would, I think, be very naturally understood by the apostles as refering not merely, or even so much to their own personal securitie and defence, as to the maintenance of their cause and interest amongst mankind, notwithstanding all the opposition, that should be made to it. but in this view, what would the promise, according to the interpretation just now mentioned of that particular phrase, “the end of the world,” amount to? “I will be with you indeed, but it will be but for a very little while.” “I promise nothing, I give you no assurance of any success to attend the cause you are now embarking in, or of any care that will be taken of it in the conduct of divine providence beyond the period of your own personal ministrie in promoting it. so far I have authoritie to assure you, that it will be a successful one. but as to any thing farther I engage not.” discouraging consolation truly! whereas, supposing the words to refer literally, and according to the common signification of these terms, to the end of the world, the whole passage will then contain a clear and gracious declaration from the mouth of him, who was “the author and finisher” of our christian

christian "faith," that all it's rich, inestimable blessings were originally intended for the use and benefit of mankind throughout every successive generation to time's remotest period. it is strongly calculated in this view to excite our attention to the gospel system as being equally concerned, both in it's privileges and duties, with those to whom it was originally made known. and it was giving the highest encouragement to the apostles to exert themselves with a persevering ardor of spirit in supporting the cause and interest of christianitie, to assure them that the happie effects of their zeal and labor should be as durable as time itself. whereas the declaration understood in that other sense we have mentioned, would rather tend, as has been just now hinted, to damp and abate their zeal, than to excite or to inflame it. besides, had our Savior only said, "lo, I am with you *alway*," that expression alone would naturally have implied, that the credit and authoritie of the gospel should be supported, and the knowlege of it remain amongst mankind to the latest times. but, when he adds, "even to the end of the world," is it not manifestly his intention to heighten the expression, and consequently the assurance, which it carried in it, of the stabilitie and durable nature of the gospel-scheme to the utmost? and yet upon the interpretation refered to the first expression is weakened and enfeebled by the addition of the last; and the gracious promise reduced indeed! to all which we
may

BOOK I.

may add, that it seems very plainly to have been our Savior's design that these words, "alway, to the end of the world," whatever be the meaning of them, should be applied as well to the preceding command, "go and teach all nations," as to the annexed promise or assurance given, "lo I am with you." so that if the promise is to be limited to the age of the apostles, we must likewise suppose that in the intention of our Savior himself the command also to preach the gospel, and to instruct mankind in the principles of religion, is with the same restriction to be understood. consequently it is in effect a command, a dutie expressly enjoined upon the apostles, not to give themselves the least thought or concern about extending the salutary influences of his gospel to any future age, but wholly to confine their views in the preaching and publication of it to the narrow boundaries of their own. but can we indeed think of imputing any such command, any such restrictive clause, any such rejection of posterity, any such disdain of future times to the benevolent and friendly Jesus! and that the apostles and primitive converts to the christian faith understood our Savior in this declaration according to the sense we have been contending for, is evident, not only from St. Paul's assigning it as one point of difference between the mosaic institution and that of the gospel, that the one was temporarie, the other abiding; but likewise from the appellation expressly given to the gospel in

in the new testament, that, I mean, of it's being CHAP. II.
the "everlasting or perpetual gospel;" and from
the doxologie occuring in another epistle written by
this very apostle, and which seems indeed of itself
to be fully decisive as to the meaning of our Lord
in the passage we have been reviewing, and that in-
tended perpetuities of the christian religion, which
we have supposed it to implicate; "now unto him,
"that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all
"that we ask or think, according to the power,
"that worketh in us, unto him be glorie in the
"church by Christ Jesus, *throughout all ages*
"world without end. amen." thus much how-
ever is certain, that christianity is spoken of in this
chapter by the apostle as being a more durable dis-
pensation than the law of Moses. and it is made,
as we see, a point of characteristical difference be-
tween them, that the one was transient, the other
designed for a stable and permanent duration.
now the law of Moses continued in force fifteen
hundred years. the gospel has subsisted only a-
bout two hundred and sixty years longer than that
period. and this is so small a difference in so
great a number of years, that we can scarce imagin
any such distinction would have been made solely
on account of it. from whence I would conclude,
that we at least of the present day are as much
within the intended sphere of gospel-influence as
those among whom the christian doctrine was ori-
ginally published. nor is there the least proba-
bilities

bilitie of it's evidences being worn out, according to a fanciful objection, that has sometimes been started upon this head, for centuries to come. the evangelical historie is one, in which, from the very time of it's publication down to the present day, vast numbers in various parts of the world have been peculiarly interested, and in such a manner as none ever were in any other historie whatsoever. it is likewise one, the veracity of which has been more disputed than that of any other historie, that has been ever written. and on both these accounts, such a distinct, regular and ample detail of evidence has been produced in favor of it, as will, we hope, more distinctly appear in a following chapter, that it is now by far the best attested and most authentic of any ancient historie, that we have in our hands, and is therefore less likely than any other historie, whether ancient or modern, to fail in point of evidence sufficient for establishing the truth of it. for as there are no ancient histories equally well-attested, so it is no way probable, that any modern one, or any yet to be written, will ever be transmitted to distant ages, with such peculiar circumstances of credibilitie. but of this in the following chapter.

C H A P. III.

On the credibilitie of the gospel historie.

THAT gospel-peculiaritie, which naturally CHAP. III.
comes in the first place to be considered, is
the truth of christianitie itself in the complex view
of it, as a special institution of religion by extra-
ordinarie and peculiar evidences authorised or at-
tested to be divine. this extraordinarie evidence
arises from those "miracles, signs and wonders"
spoken of in that so animated address of St. Pe-
ter's, occasioned by the first appearance or exhibi-
tion of those miraculous gifts, with which him-
self and the rest of the apostles were so soon after
our Savior's ascension endued, and by which they
were enabled to propagate his gospel throughout
the world. for the realitie of these "miracles"
he appeals to those, who had been eye-witnesses of
them, or who lived at the very time, and in the
very countrie, in which they were performed. and
undoubtedly, had they been furnished with any
thing to object, we should have heard of it; or sup-
posing their objections to have been sufficient for over-
throwing the now presumed truth of christianitie, we

BOOK I.

should perhaps have never heard of that. “as
 “you yourselves know” was the decisive language
 of the apostles upon such occasions. but the
 question now is; how shall *we* know the truth and
 “certaintie” of these “things,” we, who live at
 such a distance of time from the period, when those
 facts recorded in historie, and upon which the di-
 vine authoritie of the gospel is founded, are said
 to have happened. and a question it is, that well
 deserves to be diligently, and ought to be freely and
 impartially considered. and the answer to it must
 depend upon these two particulars; first, an inquirie
 into the credibilitie of that historie, in which the
 gospel-miracles are recorded, and then a considera-
 tion, common to us with those first and primitive
 believers, of the force of the evidence arising from
 these miracles, supposing them to be well-attested
 facts; the evidence, I say, arising from them in
 proof of the special mission of our Savior, and di-
 vine authoritie of his religion.

First then, with respect to the credibilitie of that
 historie, in which the gospel-miracles are recorded,
 or in other words, the historie of the new testament;
 the consideration of this particular being only one
 part of our design in the present work, it will be
 immediately perceived, that, in the compass of
 but a single chapter allotted to it, we must needs
 content ourselves with very imperfect hints, or at
 most with general topics of argument. yet am I
 far from apprehending, that the cause of christi-
 anitie

anitie can suffer even from such a comparatively CHAP. III.
slight and scantie view of it's evidences. on the
contrarie, from the little, which our proposed li-
mits will allow us to offer, any one will, I pre-
sume, be able to discern, how much more might
have been suggested, had there been room for en-
larging. To procede then; it is readily admit-
ted, that there is false historie as well as true; that
works of imagination do sometimes innocently
assume the name of historie, and that not with a
little too of craft and iniquitie attempts have been
often made to substitute fabulous narrations in the
room of real truth. yet from these very conces-
sions it follows, that there are certain marks or
criteria, by which the fiction may be discerned
or the falsehood detected, and the truth and credi-
bitie of this or that particular historie ascertained.
some of these are such as are absolutely necessarie,
in order to authenticate an historie. there are
others, which, when joined to these in support of
it's authenticitie, are fairly sufficient to gain the
assent of a rational and candid inquirer. and there
are yet another kind, which, when superadded to
both the former, render our conviction of it's truth
more certain, and any suspicion of imposture and
falsehood so much the more unreasonable. upon
these principles it is, that many historical records
are with intire satisfaction received as genuine and
true by those, who are at the farthest remove from
credulitie; even though not attended with that high
degree

degree of evidence, by which other histories are in fact supported, much less with that, which may in the nature of things be supposed. if then it can be made to appear, that the gospel-historie is not only attended with all the necessarie together with the merely sufficient marks of creditie, but likewise with all that abundance or superfluitie of proof, that can possibly be imagined to take place with respect to any historie whatsoever, we must then, I think, either admit that historie to be true, or reject all historie whatsoever as false, content ourselves with ocular and instant fact alone, and own at once, that we are as little capable of knowing what has been transacted on this stage of the world, as we are of fore-telling what will be the events occurring in it. in attempting to trace out these several criterions of historic truth, of which we have been speaking, and to shew how justly they may be applied to the gospel-historie in confirmation of it's creditie, it can scarce, I imagine, be necessarie, though some indeed have thought it so, to observe, that the persons, whose lives and actions are recorded in this historie, had really an existence among men. it is true, that without admitting this, all farther debate or inquirie upon the subject must be in vain. yet were I to produce the testimonie of Suetonius, of Tacitus or of Plinie, in proof, that Jesus Christ did really live upon earth, and converse amongst mankind, might I not with equal proprietie be called upon to produce my evidence,

dence, that there were ever such men, as these? and whatever testimonie should be alleged, might it not in like manner be called in question? so that here universal tradition and the common consent of mankind make formal proof superfluous. if it did not, inquirie would be endless. this preliminarie then being as plain and obvious in point of fact, as it is necessarie in point of argument, I go on to observe,

First, that the gospel-historie undertakes to account for a certain great and remarkable event known, acknowledged and confessed by all; the rise I mean, establishment and continuance in the world, of a bodie of men, who call themselves christians. and this circumstance is in itself one natural mark of credit and motive of belief. as a considerable part of mankind do now distinguish themselves by the christian name, so, I apprehend, none will be so sceptical as to doubt, whether or no such a societie has not for a long succession of years been existing, it being so infallibly to be traced up through a regular and uninterrupted train of historie to a distance of more than seventeen hundred; during all which time, they have by a variety of marks and characteristics been distinguished from the rest of the world. now all historical events of this kind must, if I may be allowed the expression, have an historical cause. that is, we cannot but conclude, that there must have been a ground and foundation for them in some preceding events,

events, that either have, or may, in like manner become the subject of historie. so that, if we have no accounts of this sort in our hands, we naturally wish for them. if any offer themselves we naturally admit them, the proposed account carrying in it a just correspondence with the event to be accounted for, and no direct or positive evidence of forgerie appearing. such historical accounts, I say, we naturally admit; as naturally, as we should, on the other hand, reject any pretended historie of a societie or bodie of men, how speciously soever the narration might be conducted, if such a societie was never known in any age or period of the world to have existed, or in like manner the historical reasons of any supposed event, when it does not appear, that the event itself ever took place. should any author, for example, have taken upon him to give a minute detail of the various occurrences, schemes, and transactions, by which the liberties of the Roman people were destroyed; if we knew in fact from universal tradition and the concurring testimonie of all historie, that these liberties never were destroyed, we should have the most certain evidence, that such an author was an impostor, and his whole narration fictitious and imaginarie. but knowing, as we do, that Rome did indeed lose her liberties, and that the common-wealth was changed into an absolute monarchie, we naturally admit as credible those accounts, that are given us of the factions of Rome, of the wars between Pompey
and

and Cæſar, of the conteſt between Antonie and Octavius, of the defeat of the former, and the eſta-
bliſhment of the Roman empire under the latter, afterwards aſſuming the name of Auguſtus. they aſſign a very probable cauſe of an event, that cannot be diſputed ; and nothing appears to invalidate their credit. if therefore the gospel-hiſtorie furniſhes us with an eaſie and intelligible account of the ſubſiſtence and firſt riſe of the chriſtian ſocietie, of which otherways we could give no account at all, we cannot, I think, reſuſe our aſſent to that hiſtorie, unleſs ſome direct and poſitive evidence be produced, ſhewing it to be a falſe one. in ſhort, here is a great and univerſally acknowledged event to be accounted for ; an event, in all its circumſtances conſidered, one of the moſt extraordinary, intereſting and important, that can poſſibly be imagined. here is the hiſtorie of the four gospels, and the acts of the apoſtles, together with their epiſtles, that give a natural, fair, and credible account of it. this therefore, as a reaſonable being, I muſt neceſſarily acquieſce in, till ſomebody or another furniſhes me with a better.

But this argument will receive a very great degree of additional force from conſidering another mark of credit naturally expected in any hiſtorical narrative aſſuming to be a genuin and authentic one ; which is, that it be conſiſtent ; and from ſhewing how ſtrongly and evidently it is apparent in that of the gospel. the gospel-hiſtorie is

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conſiſtent

consistent with other historical records ; it is consistent with itself ; and by consequence the several evangelical writers must be found consistent with each other. the time, which it fixes upon for the rise and birth of christianitie, is exactly the same with that which is fixed upon for the same event by other ancient historians. and in the numberless references, that are made throughout the evangelical historie to the government, laws and customs of the jewish people, there is a perfect agreement with the customs of the modern jews, and with those histories, which they themselves allow to be in the highest degree genuin and authentic. that expectation universally entertained among them of the coming of the Messiah about the time of our Savior's appearance, which the gospel supposes, is likewise mentioned and taken notice of in other histories of ancient date. and where-ever there are any references, in the writings of the evangelists, of which kind the passages are very numerous, to the customs and usages of the heathen world, whether of the Greeks or Romans, there appears the same harmonie and agreement with the best-attested accounts we have from heathen authors themselves of those customs and usages. and, as the gospel-historie does thus harmonise with other writings and historical records, it is likewise equally consistent with itself. our Savior always appears in one uniform character, as a teacher, instructor, and guide, of spotless innocence and consummate virtue.

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Peter, James and John preserve their rank and station, their general character, and their peculiar temper throughout. they are supposed together with the rest of the apostles to be strongly prejudiced in favor of a temporal Messiah. this prejudice operates uniformly, during a certain period. it is supposed to make them very slow and backward in apprehending the meaning of many of our Savior's addresses both to themselves and to "the multitude." and here too the character is regularly sustained; and the same genius and turn of thought every where appears, till the period of full illumination takes place. after which they become bold and intrepid in preaching those doctrines, which before, in consequence of this prejudice, they could with the greatest difficulty, if at all, understand. I add once more, which, though it be indeed a reflexion necessarily resulting from those, which we have now been insisting upon, does yet well deserve to be still more particularly attended to, that the several authors, which make up the bodie of the evangelical historie, are likewise consistent with each other. and thus they become so many distinct and separate, and at the same time credible vouchers to the truth of christianitie; as truly distinct, as any of those heathen authors, who have born testimony in their different writings to one and the same fact. and, as this varietie of evidence is supposed to corroborate the proof in the one case, it ought undoubtedly to be allowed the same force in

the other. if indeed the several writers of the new testament at the same time that they took upon them to give an account of the same religious founder, and the same religious institution, had represented the character of the one, and the nature of the other, in terms of essential and fundamental difference; then the testimonie of each would probably have destroyed the credit of all. but as their evidences are distinct, and yet harmonious, the proof must necessarily be supposed to advance in the manner we have been hinting at. that there is in realitie such an harmonie and consent between the several writers of the new testament, must, I think, appear to everie one, who is but tolerably conversant with them. and indeed they are constantly looked upon, both by those who admit their evidence, and those who refuse it, as bearing their joined, united testimonie to the same leading facts, the same fundamental principles and truths. some difference, it is true, as to occasional names, incidental occurrences, the precise day or hour of this or that transaction, and the like, have been observed on the one side, and insisted upon with some airs of triumph on the other. but these are circumstances, upon which historical consistencie is not at all depending, and are of so inconsiderable a nature, that the proof arising from it cannot, I think, be looked upon as at all abated by them. they are such differences as are observed in almost all the writers of historie, without at all invalidating their

their testimonie, as to those principal facts, which constitute all the worth and value, the very life and soul of an historical narration. and why must we suffer that to destroy the credit of an evangelical writer, which we suppose to be so well and easily reconcilable both with integritie and good information in a pagan one? thus then it appears, that there is in the new testament writings all that consistencie, which naturally disposes us to receive an historie as genuin and authentic, especially if attended with this farther circumstance, which I mention as a

Third mark of credibilitie, the impossibilitie I mean of assigning any reason, that could either have induced the author wilfully to impose upon mankind, or have occasioned his neglect as to the proper method of preventing it. it is observed by one of the writers of Roman historie, that “ many
“ of those, who have undertaken to record the
“ transactions and events of former times, have
“ done it rather with a view of displaying their
“ learning and eloquence, than of giving the
“ world a just and faithful account of those several
“ particulars, that make the subject of their historie; and that for this reason they have been
“ the less sollicitous in inquiring after the truth,
“ imagining, that the elegance of their compositions would be sure to gain them admirers, and
“ that at the same time it would be extremely
“ difficult for any to detect them in their misrepresentations.”

“sentations.” vid. Herodian. Hist. lib. i. Proœm. now a little reflexion will suffice to satisfy us, that there can be no possible ground for admitting any motive of this kind in the case of the evangelical historians. in our blessed Savior’s parables and addresses to the multitude, together with his vindication of himself before the Jewish Sanhedrim, as well as in the affectionate discourse he held with his disciples in the view of his approaching death, we have incontestable instances, never enough to be admired, of a noble eloquence and just simplicity of diction. several of St. Paul’s speeches, as recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, are striking examples of a manly, commanding and pathetic oratory. yet the manner, in which these and the other materials of the evangelical historie are composed, is such, as does, I think, evidently shew, that the writers of them, at the same time, that they use a style perfectly natural and pertinent, forcible and justly animated, are at the utmost remove from all affectation of eloquence, from all historical parade and ostentation. it evidently appears, that their principal design, their grand and leading intention was, to record faithfully what was said, and what was done. and if in prosecuting this design they have written in such a plain, simple, spirited and expressive manner, as to deserve applause, though evidently without the appearance of aiming at it, can they on this account be less credible authors? the writer

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just now mentioned farther observes, *ibid.* that there are "other historians, who for the sake of gratifying their resentment, or of flattering and exalting the characters either of princes, statesmen, or private friends, have made no scruple of having recourse to such dishonest arts as might best subserve these designs." this is undoubtedly true as a general observation; but is not to be applied to this or that historian in particular, without some direct and positive proof, justifying such an application of it. if to this or that, then with equal propriety to every other. and thus would all historic faith be destroyed. and what possible proof of any such procedure can be alleged against the evangelical writers, founded either upon their manner of writing, or upon the evidence of any credible historie? did they then expect a reward for giving a supposititious and false account of the rise and progress of christianity? from whom must it have come? would any christian have been disposed to reward them for such a labor? or, if that supposition be admitted, might they have not been much more liberally recompensed by the jews or heathens for giving the true one; had this indeed been different from that, which they have in fact published to the world? or did they in the last place compose their historie with a view of magnifying themselves, and of being celebrated in after-ages as the founders of christianity? this is a supposition most manifestly repugnant to the whole
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tenor of the new testament, in which the apostles and evangelists always speak of another, as being the "author and finisher" of the christian "faith," ascribing to him all the glorie and honor of their own miracles, of their preaching, their labors and sufferings, and representing themselves in no other light, than as his ministers and servants. The noble author of the Characteristics may seem to have made it an objection to the gospel-historie, that our Savior did not himself write an account of his own actions, life and doctrines. for thus he expresses himself; "nor did the divine "author" and "founder of our religion condescend to be an author in this other respect. he who could best have given us the historie of his own life, with the intire sermons and divine discourses, which he made in public, was pleased to leave it to others to *take in hand*." he was so. but from what has just now been suggested it appears, that this very conduct was one, among innumerable other proofs, of his admirable and consummate wisdom. had he himself been the author of any narrative relating his own life and actions, how readily might it have been alleged by the opposers of our most holie faith, that he had written them on purpose to magnifie his own fame and character, and had represented things in a manner futable to that design? but by leaving everie thing of this kind to the care and management of others, this objection is intirely removed. it is even impossible to
 imagine,

imagine, what other inducement the apostles could have to write, as they have done concerning our Savior, but that of truth itself. at the same time it will surely be allowed, that eye and ear-witnesses are to all intents and purposes sufficient evidences to things said or done. to what a small compass must our historical knowledge be reduced, if we are to believe no relation of facts, but what is given by the person immediately concerned in them, or of transactions, but those, which are communicated by the very person who conducted them? is the historie of England at all less credible, because none of the several kings, of whose reigns it is composed, appear to have had any share in the writing of it? but one, who is already a believer in christianitie will naturally make a farther reflexion upon this head; namely, that, as it was no way necessarie, that our Savior should have been in this manner employed, it being a province, that might, without any detriment to the christian cause, be devolved upon others, it would likewise have been altogether beneath his dignitie to have engaged in it. thus far then there seems to be no objection to the credit of the gospel-historie. every thing on the contrarie looks fair, probable, and unsuspicious. and the whole will be greatly corroborated by considering in

The fourth place, the time, in which an historie is written, and the place, in which the scene of the transactions recorded in it is laid. the historie
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of the gospel, in comparison with many others, may well be called a modern one: so that there cannot be the least pretence for it's coming within that period, which has sometimes, by way of distinction, been called the age of dark and fabulous historie. it is likewise to be remembered, that at the time when it was published, the Roman empire had enlarged itself to a vast extent, and included in it that very countrie of Judea, in which the scene of the first establishment of the gospel is laid, and that the connexion of this countrie, together with other remote ones, with the seat of empire, must have rendered it far more easy for a considerable part of mankind to inform themselves concerning the truth and certaintie of what is related in it. and this especially, as there were so great a number of jews scattered up and down throughout the several parts of the empire, who would naturally interest themselves in the transactions and events of their original country. and thus, as Mr. Hervey, in one of his Dialogues, has happily enough expressed it, "the evangelical dove mounted the wings of the Roman eagle, and flew with a surprising expedition through all nations." but, besides all this, it is to be considered as a point of very great importance in this argument, that at the time, when the gospel-historie was published, great numbers had been already converted to the christian faith. christianitie had made a deep impression upon the world before any written records of it appeared.

peared. and the first profelytes to the belief of it were not the converts of books, but of facts. these facts must have been published with the greatest force of evidence, before there could have been any converts at all. and those, who were converted by them, as they could not but be very affectionately attentive to any accounts, that were published of the rise and progress of their own religion, must likewise have had it in their power, with the utmost ease, to detect and expose any false representations, that might have been given of it. for, though the historie of the gospel was first published at the distance of some years from the declaration and proposal of it to the world by the mouth of the apostles, yet was the interval so short, especially with regard to some parts of it, that, we cannot but conclude, that those, on the one hand, who published it, had all the necessarie means of information, and, that those, on the other, to whom such accounts were offered, must have had it easily in their power to detect any imposition, that might have been attempted in them.

But this leads me to observe, in the fifth and last place, as a farther mark of credibilitie, that the historie of the new testament has been all along appealed to, through the several succeeding ages of the christian church, in all parts of the world, and by all the different sects, that have arose in it, as containing the only true, genuin and authentic account of the rise, foundation, and principles of

their religion. this is a fact incontestably demonstrated by the labors of many learned men, but by none, I suppose, with such a precision, amplitude, and force of argument, as by the very learned and ingenious Dr. Lardner. and in conjunction with what has been already offered, it seems to afford an irrefragable proof of the credit of the gospel-historie. for, as it appears that these accounts were published at a time, when those, who were most nearly interested in them, must have had it in their power to judge of their truth, so it is to the last degree improbable, that, if they who were thus qualified to decide upon it, had rejected them as spurious, they should ever afterwards have been appealed to as genuine and authentic. in some such method as this, which we have been pursuing, I apprehend the credit of the gospel-historie may with the greatest strength and sufficiency of argument be established. men may fancy as they please, as to what might have been done and should have been done in the case, in order to authenticate it. and so they may with respect to any other point or article whatsoever, till they fancy themselves out of all their reason and understanding, and into universal scepticism and ignorance. and as Cicero, speaking upon this very subject of historical evidence observes, *est ridiculum ad ea quæ habemus, nihil dicere: quærere quæ habere non possumus.* Pro Arch. for my own part I cannot see one circumstance of incredibility attending

the gospel-historie. and with the greatest propriety and truth of sentiment it is, in my opinion, asserted by Mr. Toland, that "all possible matters
" of fact, duly attested by coeval persons as
" known to them, and successively related by
" others of different times, nations, or interests,
" who could neither be imposed upon themselves,
" nor be justly suspected of combining together to
" deceive others, ought to be received by us for as
" certain and indubitable, as if we had seen them
" with our own eyes, or heard them with our own
" ears." and again to the same effect he says;
" so many circumstances frequently concur in
" historie, as render it equal to intuition. thus I
" can as soon deny my own being as the murder
" of Cicero, or the story of William the Con-
" queror." see his *Christianity not mysterious*,
§. i. chap. iii. p. 17. and §. iii. chap. iv. p. 128.
see also Baxter's *Saints Rest*, Pref. to Part II. p.
145, 6. 4to. and for a masterly and striking view
of the argument itself, Macknight's *Preliminary
Observations*, No. X. still however it remains to
be considered, what evidence this credible historie
affords us of the divine and special authority of
the gospel. this evidence arises, and only can arise,
from its miraculous attestations. the nature and
certainty of which therefore we propose to make
the subject of our ensuing chapter.

C H A P. IV.

On miracles.

BOOK I.

IN order to invalidate that external or traditionarie evidence, that has been by the several defenders of christianitie so distinctly and copiously insisted upon, in favor of the gospel-historie, it has been urged, that this historie is in itself and in it's own nature incredible, and therefore not to be authenticated by any testimonies whatsoever. this is an objection founded upon the miracles recorded in the new testament. and yet it is from these alone, that the christian religion derives all it's authoritie and importance, as a divine and specially-attested institution. it is an objection therefore demanding the most attentive and impartial consideration. and it is accordingly that which we propose to make the subject of the present chapter.

There are three methods of arguing against the evidence arising from miracles, in favor of the divine and special authoritie of any religious institution. they have all in fact been made use of for this purpose. nor do I know of any other, that can in such a view be recured to. in the first place
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it is said, that miracles are impossible. secondly ^{CHAP. IV.} by those, who are willing to allow the possibilitie of them, it is nevertheless insisted upon, that they require very extraordinarie proof in support of their credibilitie, with an insinuation, that this sufficiencie of proof, or the extraordinarie evidence in such case so manifestly requisite, does not in fact appear connected with those we have upon record in the gospel. thirdly, it is urged, that miracles, though possible, and allowed to be really and truly performed, will not, after all, amount to a proof sufficiently clear and convincing of a divine and special authoritie enforcing this or that particular institution of religion. in answer therefore to each of these objections, and according to the order, in which they have just now been mentioned, it will here be our business to evince ; first, that miracles are possible ; secondly, that there are some circumstances, which may render them altogether as credible, as any other facts, that are recorded in historie, and that everie one of those circumstances is in realitie attending the miracles of the gospel ; thirdly, that such miracles, as were wrought by Jesus Christ and his apostles, and thus credibly attested, are a strict and proper, a plain and undeniable proof of the divine and special authoritie of that religion, which has by virtue of their accompanying influence and power been introduced into the world and propagated amongst mankind.

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In the first place then is to be evinced the possibility of miracles; that is, of a designed and voluntarie deviation in the methods of divine providence from the established course and general order of nature, made sensible or apparent to mankind or other intelligent beings by it's effects. one might have imagined indeed the proof of this point to have been altogether unnecessary with respect to those entertaining the belief of a Deitie and a providence. but, though the objection, which under this particular we have proposed to obviate, was, if we are not mistaken, first insisted upon by one, who denied, or at least undertook to controvert, any such divine, presiding power in nature, it seems to have been taken up by others without at all attending to the consequence, or considering with what consistencie they could adopt it. for in truth it is an objection fit only for an atheist to insist upon. for whence, I ask, can the alleged impossibilities arise, but from supposing the course of nature to subsist independently of any governing mind? which admitted, it must indeed be impossible, that alterations should be introduced into it, or it's laws suspended, so as to implicate any particular intention or view in such a deviation from them. I express myself thus, because even the atheist must allow, though the concession would be indeed of no signification or importance, that alterations may take place in nature. since the difficultie, one would imagine, cannot be quite so great in accounting for these
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by chance, as for nature's order itself. but, according to the manner in which we have stated the impossibilitie, and in which light only it can deserve the least consideration or regard, it must needs be totally inconsistent with the belief of a Deitie to grant it. upon this principle it is maintained, that in the various events observable throughout the known and usual course of nature, it is not the power of second causes, that produces the effect, but the animating and super-intending influence of the first; who can therefore, when he pleases, produce the like effects by different means, or without any secondarie agencie at all. for it will not surely be said, that there is any thing in a miracle, that can be more difficult to omnipotence, than what is in the daily productions of nature effected. though a miracle to us, it is with respect to the Deitie no extraordinarie work at all. it calls for no especial effort of his power, but is accomplished with as much ease as the slightest productions in nature; if any of nature's operations could even comparatively be so styled. nor are we to look upon any such miraculous exertions of it as methods, which contrary to his original plan he has been, as it were, obliged by some unexpected event to have recourse to. but they are to be considered as having been included within that plan itself upon the foresight of a just and necessarie occasion demanding them. deviations they are from the usual operations of nature. but then they were, in

the original construction of the scheme of the divine, universal government, as effectually provided for, as any of it's most stated methods of procedure. if such extraordinarie phenomena, when really occurring, can be perceived even by us to be admirably well adapted for answering the most beneficial and important purposes, as in the case of the christian religion confirmed and supported by them; is it possible, that the supremely wise and unerring Deitie should not, in forming the system of his providence, have discerned this useful tendencie, this natural and just occasion for them? or that, discerning it, he should not by his infinite benevolence be determined so to regulate and adjust the plan of his universal government, as that in the most proper and seasonable time they should become real events? thus is it not only possible, that miracles should by the infinite power of God be performed; but that they should even constitute a part in the original plan of his moral government. and this latter is by far the more natural supposition in the case than any that shall implicate the contrarie. such events by being miraculous to us answer all the ends and purposes, that we can any way imagine to have been intended in the production of them, without supposing them to be in any respect unthought of or unexpected events to the Deitie himself. a sentiment but too plainly, as we think, implied in the term, interposition, so often made use of in speaking of a miraculous revelation, and particularly of the miracles

racles themselves enforcing it. though Bishop Butler indeed, when treating upon this very subject, with a strange kind of inconsistencie, seems to suppose, that "*interpositions*" may make a "*part*" in "*the original plan of things.*" See his Analogy, Part II. ch. ii. p. 245. 8vo. and thus much may suffice for this first particular, the possibilitie of miracles.

The second thing proposed to be proved was this, that miracles may be so circumstanced, as to become altogether as credible as any other facts or events, and that this is in realitie the case with respect to those recorded in the gospel. and here I apprehend the most unexceptionable method of proceeding is to set imagination itself at work in search of all those circumstances, that can even with the slightest appearance of reason be thought requisite for ascertaining a genuin miracle, and to shew, as we go along and under each particular of this kind, from plain and undeniable fact, the truth of the gospel-historie being supposed, that everie one of these circumstances is attending the miracles recorded in the new testament.

And in the first place it is natural to observe, that miracles, in order to their becoming credible, especially a series of them, should not be of a frivolous or trifling nature. such a character adhering to them would give much occasion of suspicion, as it would appear beneath the majestie of that soveraign being, to whom we must ascribe them,

BOOK I.

them, and altogether unfutable to that dignitie of operation, which is in all his other works so evident and conspicuous. and by this test the gospel-miracles are very easily upon the first aspect, and throughout the whole tenor of them, to be distinguished from manie, that are recorded both in heathen storie and in popish legends. in the former we read of cutting a whetstone through with a razor; a miracle imputed to no less a person, than one of the kings of Rome; of carrying water in a sieve, and the like: in the latter we read of a famous flying house, of speaking images, dancing lights, the virgin Mary coming from heaven for no other purpose, but to turn a man in his bed, with others innumerable of the same cast and nature. how remote from everie thing of this kind the miracles of the gospel! in them we see that very dignitie, that substance, seriousness, gravity and importance, which we must naturally expect to meet with in every genuin operation of the kind. in what can these marks be more conspicuous, than in restoring the lame, giving sight to the blind, healing infirmities of the longest continuance and of the most grievous and afflicting nature, feeding thousands at once, that were almost "readie to "perish" for want of food; and even raising and bringing into life again those, who had been actually dead?

Secondly, miracles, in order to their becoming credible, should be very numerous, and frequently performed

performed by one and the same person, or by others acting in conjunction and harmonie with him or by commission from him. because the greater the number, the less likelihood of any imposture or juggling in the case; or at least, if any such imposture there be, the greater likelihood, that it should by this means come to be detected. in one or two instances we may be deceived. but the probability of our being so decreases in exact proportion to the number of the miracles performed in the manner we have been speaking of. and of this mark or criterion also the gospel-miracles will safely bear the test. were we to take an exact view of all those, which were wrought by our blessed Savior and his apostles, as recorded in the new testament, we should find even the number of these to be such as to satisfy any reasonable expectation upon this head. but, that we might here have nothing to object, the evangelists have been careful to assure us, that these were far from being the whole number actually performed by them. upon several occasions they tell us only in general terms of miracles, that were wrought in this or that place by our Savior or his apostles, without specifying the particular instances; which indeed must have swelled their historie to such a degree, as would have defeated the very end of writing it. and this is the reason expressly assigned by St. John for not recording more of them at large. “ and “ there are also many other things, which Jesus “ did,

BOOK I.

“ did, the which, if they should be written every
 “ one, I suppose that even the world itself could
 “ not contain the books, that should be written.”
 See the twenty-first chapter of his gospel, at verse
 the twenty-fifth, and compare ch. xx. ver. 30.
 from whence it will appear, that among the “ other
 “ things” here spoken of, are to be included
 “ other signs” or miracles, besides those particu-
 larly recorded by the evangelist.

For the same general reason there is a third
 mark of credibilitie, which we must naturally ex-
 pect to meet with in true and genuin miracles.
 and that is, that they should be of very differing
 sorts. there is evidently a greater credibilitie or
 likelihood, that a man should be able to impose
 upon me in one or two particular modes of per-
 formance in this extraordinarie way, than in a large
 and copious diversitie of such surprizing and won-
 derful actions. and what set of miracles could
 have better corresponded to this criterion or test of
 credibilitie than those of the gospel? in restoring
 the lame, “ healing the sick, and curing all man-
 “ ner of diseases,” there must needs be a very suf-
 ficient varietie, even though all these operations are
 in the general relative to the human bodie, to raise
 a very strong apprehension, that the person per-
 forming all these works with equal ease, and upon
 the most sudden and immediate occasions, and
 without any apparent use of means, must do it not
 merely by dint of a happie dexteritie, or by virtue
 only

only of some uncommon acquaintance with the secrets of natural medicine; but by a power in an extraordinarie and special manner derived from on high. it is sometimes the matter of our admiration, if after a whole life of application and studie a man becomes famous for curing only some one particular disorder, even though but gradually and by very slow advances. but what distant resemblance now can we trace between curing bodily diseases and a miraculous draught of fishes, or the summoning one single fish to this or that particular part of a sea with a piece of money in it's mouth? let not this last be thought a trifling miracle. for, as it was performed for a very important end; to avoid giving offence, and to set an example of justice to the government, under which we live; so it implied a most amazing knowlege of what was passing in that particular scene of nature, which is of all others in this world of ours the most remote from human observation. it is a miracle from which, in the very nature of it, the suspicion of juggling or collusion must, by the strongest circumstances imaginable, be excluded. and on this account it is peculiarly well fitted to give credit to all the rest, that were performed by the same extraordinarie messenger and prophet of the most high. but what similitude between these last mentioned miracles, and that of causing a loaf or two of bread to swell to such dimensions in the hands of those, that were to feed upon it, as to suffice
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for a very plentiful meal to four, or five thousand people? what similitude between any of these and the being enabled in an instant to speak fluently, and with propriety, a great number of languages, which, till that moment, had been intirely unknown and foreign to the speaker? or what can differ more widely from any one, or from all of these, than the asswaging, by a word spoken only, the most boisterous tempest, and commanding the sea into an instantaneous and perfect calm? how different still that most amazing miracle wrought by our blessed Savior in the temple, the driving out of it so great a number of people intirely against their own will, and against the inclination of all the officers both of the temple and of the state; and this by a person not visibly attended with the least power or authority to execute it! he had no military force by which to expel them, nor any warrant to shew from the civil magistrate. yet was his command in this case immediately and most punctually complied with. and, to add no more in this way of specification or example, how eminently distinguished among our Savior's miracles, that grand and most stupendous one of raising the dead. and yet with how much propriety might we here insist upon the numerous predictions delivered by our blessed Savior himself and his apostles, as well as those pointing out the time, manner, circumstances, and great design of his appearance, for so many ages preceding the actual event itself,

as a species of miracles totally distinct from any that yet we have mentioned, and consequently as carrying in them a distinct, and when in all their extent and copiousness considered, a most forcible and striking illustration of this third criterion or mark of creditie, in the case of miracles, either immediately exhibited or in authentic historie recorded.

But let it too be observed, that as different sorts of miracles naturally tend to strengthen the evidence of all that are thus performed by one and the same person, and to exclude the suspicion and probability of any imposture, the same end may likewise be answered by having some of the most conspicuous of them repeated. a mere artist may be successful in one attempt; and yet his art fail him, or the spectators be too cunning for him, in another of the same kind. and this is a note or test of creditie peculiarly observable in the miracles of the gospel. the most conspicuous of them are repeated. and some of them again and again. the buyers and sellers were twice driven out of the temple. the multitude was twice fed with a few loaves and fishes. the same bodily infirmities and distempers were upon many different applications and opportunities removed; and the dead frequently brought to life. nay, the very person, who did it, brought himself to life. and what difficulty can there be in believing, that he, who could resume his own life, should be able also to
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bring back others from the grave? thus do each of our Savior's miracles, whether we consider their very different nature on the one hand, or on the contrarie the proper and seasonable repetition of some of them, corroborate one another; and all together form a system or chain of miracles naturally recommending itself to our belief.

But, fourthly, another circumstance of the highest importance to the credibilitie of miracles, and one that we naturally look for in the case, is, that they should be publicly exhibited. performed in private only, it is hard to conceive what great or valuable purpose can be answered by them. and this itself would be as strong a circumstance of suspicion as any that can well be imagined in relation to them. as on the other hand, what more desirable proof of their genuineness and realitie, than their having been subjected to general scrutiny and examination? and how conspicuous now this mark of truth in those signs and wonders, which were wrought by our blessed Savior? they were performed, as St. Peter in his first address to the jewish people on the great subject of the christian veritie observes, "in the midst of them;" in their villages, towns, and cities, and in all places of public resort, such as the pools or waters of Siloam and Bethesda. it has been very justly observed, and for such reasons, as have been already hinted at, that our blessed Savior's driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple is one of the greatest, if not

not absolutely the greatest, among all the miracles, that were ever performed by him. it was a miracle wrought upon the heart of man, of great numbers of men all at once, and forcing them to do that immediately and effectually to which they had the highest averfion. See Theron and Aspasio, vol. iii. p. 77. note. now this most extraordinarie miracle was not only repeted, but performed likewise on the most public theater or scene of action, that could possibly have been fixed upon for that purpose; in the temple of Jerusalem, and at a time of general resort to it from several distant parts of the world. some indeed of our Savior's miracles were wrought in the wilderness, but then there were thousands of spectators to attest them; and these not spectators only, but actually participant in the benefit or effect of them, as in the case of the loaves and fishes. But this circumstance of credit receives a prodigious accession of strength from the particular character and disposition of the persons, in whose presence, and under whose inspection the miracles are thus publicly performed. suppose them enemies; or let them be friends, prejudiced against the particular design, for which the miracles are wrought; or should persons of both those characters be the witnesses of them, what greater advantage for detecting an imposture in the case, if any such there be, is to be conceived of? yet thus stood the matter exactly, in relation to the miracles of our blessed Lord, and of his apostles.

they were exhibited, not only in the face of the world; but in the face of bitterest enemies too, filled with all that envie, rage and malice, that would incline them with utmost eagerness to look for imposture, and with highest triumph, could it haply have been found, to expose it. and these very men were persons of the greatest credit, figure and authoritie in the whole nation. so that they could want no means or opportunitie for the strictest examination. but perhaps they were too much under the controul of their violent and outrageous passions to examine the matter coolly enough. this is not very likely to be true of all of them. and it appears from their real conduct, that they were in fact cool enough to devise and to deliberate upon every method, which was in their power, by which, if possible, to blast the credit and authoritie of our Savior's mission. there were others however, and that in great numbers, who were sufficiently calm and composed, to whose examination likewise these miracles were subjected. for it was the rulers chiefly, the scribes, priests and pharisees, that were most agitated by these malignant passions against our Savior, and not the jewish nation in general. and among the great number both of jews and gentiles, before whom our Savior's miracles and those of his apostles were performed, we may be very sure, that there must have been those, whose curiositie alone would prompt to a very strict inquiry into the truth and realitie of them. and as
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for those, who were the constant attendants upon his person, they were friends it is true. but then they were for a long while prejudiced, in the strongest degree, against the very character, which he came into the world to assume, and in support of which his miracles were performed; the character of a spiritual guide and Savior, and not that of a temporal deliverer, to which in the person of the expected Messiah, whom nevertheless our Savior asserted himself to be, they were so strongly attached. their renouncing these prejudices therefore can no otherways be accounted for, than by their believing his miracles to be genuin and real. and this testimonie in favor of them is prodigiously heightened by considering, that they not only renounced prejudices thus deeply rooted, but exposed themselves moreover to every imaginable hardship and calamitie, in affirming it to be solely upon conviction of their truth. so that there was not any one qualitie or disposition whatever wanting in those who were spectators of the christian miracles, that might induce to the severest examination of them. and of such an examination they have now stood the test for well-nigh eighteen hundred years.

I would now instance, fifthly, in another circumstance strongly corroborating the proof of miracles. and that is, that some considerable space of time be taken up in the performance of them. it might otherwise perhaps be objected, that how well

well qualified soever or disposed those, amongst whom they were wrought, might be to the examination of them, they were yet performed in so much haste, as to afford no leisure for it. but is there any room for an objection of this nature in reference to those recorded in the gospel? so far was our Savior from affecting to crowd his wonderful operations into the smallest compass of time, and bringing them, as it were, into one general performance, which might have confounded the minds of the spectators, and left no room for examining each of them apart, that they were scattered, as occasion only offered, and were performed at such a convenient distance of time from each other, as to give sufficient leisure for the examination of all. and, upon the whole, the exhibition of our Savior's miracles, together with those of his apostles, to the notice and observation of mankind, was the employment of a very considerable number of years.

Sixthly, another mark of credibilitie naturally required in miracles, in a series of miracles, and these expressly appealed to, as carrying in them the testimonie of heaven in favor of some religious institution, and as proofs of a divine and special revelation, is, that they should be of the benevolent and friendly kind. otherwise what analogie will they bear to the general scene of nature? or how in this case shall we ascribe them to the same divine and sovereign author? had our Savior, for instance,

stance, as often struck men blind in an extraordinarie and instantaneous manner, as he did in fact restore them to sight; if, instead of reinvigorating the withered hand, and causing the lame man to leap for joy, he had deprived men of the use of their limbs; if, instead of recalling the dead to their families and friends, to their usual place and station in the world, it had been his custom, by some sudden and unexpected stroke of death, to make the joyful mother childless; had he caused plagues and desolation to attend him, wherever he went, instead of kind and compassionate relief; in short, had the general tenor of his miracles been hurtful and mischievous, instead of friendly and beneficent, I acknowledge for my own part, that on this account alone I must have refused my assent to them as the genuin credentials of that prophetic character he assumed. whereas, in the real tendency of them, so highly benevolent and kind, there is such an agreement and harmonie, not only with the works of nature, but with the very doctrine, for the proof of which they are appealed to, as cannot but induce us to look upon them as extraordinary operations, particularly and expressly designed in the œconomie of divine providence, and in the counsels of the supremely gracious Deitie, for this very end.

But it is to be insisted upon, in the seventh place, as a distinct mark of credibilitie in a series of miracles, and that of the greatest moment in

BOOK I.

deciding upon their authenticitie, that they be connected with a useful and salutarie doctrine, and calculated by the particular nature of them to commend and to diffuse it. from the perfection both of the divine goodness and wisdom, it is immediately, and with the utmost certaintie, to be concluded, that, whenever there are, in the dispensations of providence, any such deviations as these from the general order of nature, it must be with a view to some very interesting and important design. and could any have been more important than the inculcating upon mankind with the highest force and energie of conviction such principles and maxims as those contained in the gospel? when we add this to all the other circumstances of credibilitie, that have been mentioned, why should we any longer hesitate or demur in admitting the miracles, which accompanie them? these are indeed unusual appearances, as the very term itself and nature of them implies. but then in the doctrines, which they were intended to enforce and propagate, and which they actually did enforce and propagate, with a degree of success incomparably beyond all that had ever before, or has ever since been known, in relation to any other system of principles or truths proposed to the reception of mankind, we are furnished with an extremely *natural* account of them? we believe many strange and surprizing things, which we cannot account for at all. why not then the gospel-miracles, for which we can assign so plain and

and obvious a reason in the highest degree honorable to the perfections and providence of the sovereign mind? and miracles in such a connexion as this become vastly more credible, when we consider, that they are the only possible means, by which a special institution of religion can be attested or enforced. and as it plainly appears in fact, that such a special institution of it as that of the gospel, was in the highest degree desirable, is it at all wonderful, that the supreme being should, as it were, have reserved this power to himself of recovering mankind to a sense of their dutie, and of their interest, by some peculiar enforcement of religious and moral obligations properly authorised and attested? in short, if it be possible in the nature of things, that miracles should be proved, it does, I think, from hence follow, that the gospel miracles are proved: because, when to all that has been already offered we add those amazing difficulties and impediments, which the gospel had to encounter, and which make it in a manner necessary to recur to miracles, in order to account for it's success, success so completely glorious and triumphant; and with this compare what, in the preceding chapter, has been insisted on in relation to the genuineness and authenticitie of the evangelic historie, there does not seem to be any one circumstance wanting, that was requisite to give them credit.

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But there is still another question remaining in the third place to be considered. and that is, allowing the miracles of the gospel to be true and real miracles, and to be very sufficiently attested, how and in what manner is it that they prove the divine authoritie of that religion, which was by their means introduced into the world, and propagated amongst mankind? upon this head much has been said about the power of other invisible agents besides the supreme and everlasting Deitie. but no more in truth does this militate against the divinitie of the gospel-miracles, than against a divine agencie or operation respecting this or that particular part in the general œconomie or order of nature. it would therefore prove just as much in favor of atheism or polytheism, as against christianitie. inferior beings may be and very probably, even according to the sentiment and suggestion of nature coinciding with what the gospel itself does indeed upon this head expressly assert, are employed in executing the general laws of nature. we look upon these laws nevertheless as being the original appointment and order of the sovereign Deitie: we ultimately adore his hand in all, acknowledging him as the prime source and origin of whatever power any other being may be endued with for putting in execution the counsels of his will. whatever subservient and secondarie agents may be employed in carrying on the course of nature,

ture, by the unitie of design so apparent in it, the same overflowing benevolence, consummate wisdom, and matchless beautie, that appear in everie part, we are unavoidably led to ascribe the whole to one supreme origin and cause. and by the very same method of reasoning must we not be determined to impute the christian miracles in the very same sense and manner to the same sovereign and almightie author? for, it is to be remembered, that, though these miracles according to the essential notion and idea of them are supernatural, yet they are not unnatural. on the contrarie, they have a most manifest and admirably exact correspondence to the general phenomena of nature. the same goodness and wisdom are apparent in them, the same reference to the welfare and highest good of man. and in the doctrines, which they were intended to enforce, he is considered in his true and proper, his original and genuin character; the character belonging to him by the very constitution of his nature, as a being made for religion, virtue, and immortalitie. So that, upon the whole, we might as well make it a matter of controverfie and debate, whether we should ascribe the growth of this or that particular plant, or even the frame and conservation of the human nature itself in this or that particular individual or in any distinct national communitie, to the divine agencie, or to the power of some inferior, though invisible being, as whether we shall ascribe the miracles of Christ and his

apostles to one, or to the other of these causes. this difficulty then being, as we hope, sufficiently obviated, and it appearing to be by far the most natural procedure in the case, to refer the miracles of the gospel ultimately to a divine agencie and power, with explicit design and intention thus exerted in favor of it's doctrines; we may now go on more distinctly to observe, that they do indeed amount to a strict and proper proof of the divine authoritie of these doctrines; being in the very nature of them, and by their conspiring tendencie, calculated for no other final purpose or design, than to recommend these very doctrines to the attention and consideration of mankind, and to spread the knowlege of them throughout the world, and being in the highest degree subservient to this. it is only under such a view or notion of them that miracles can constitute any proof or argument at all in favor of a religious system or institution. and in this light they furnish us with one that is perfectly intelligible and amply satisfactorie and convincing. had our Savior and his apostles wrought ever so many miracles, and for ever so long a succession of years, yet supposing these miracles to have been so circumstanced, as neither to excite general attention, nor in any other way to enable them to propagate their doctrine in the world; had they for instance been performed only in some one private house or familie, and before two or three or some such inconsiderable number

ber of witnesses alone, they would have been very far from amounting, as I presume, to any sufficient evidence of a divine and special authoritie accompanying it. they would rather in this case have had a contrarie effect, and the question would immediately have occurred; if these miracles are of divine origin, and intended to enforce and inculcate upon mankind the doctrine preached by these persons, why are they not rendered more conducive to that end? why "done in a corner?" but, when such a system of miracles as those recorded in the gospel stands connected with such a system of doctrines as that which was preached by Jesus Christ and his apostles; miracles in the immediate nature and directest tendencie of them calculated to awaken mens attention to these doctrines, and to spread the knowlege of them in the world, and actually producing the most important, extensive, and lasting effects of this kind; what inference can be more obvious or conclusive, than that this was indeed the very design and purpose of heaven in having them performed? what reason else can we assign for their being by a divine appointment wrought at that particular time rather than at any other, in that particular connexion rather than in any other? but is it to be believed, that the supreme Deitie would in so signal and remarkable a manner have recommended to mens consideration and regard the doctrines of the gospel, if they had not been true, salutarie, and calculated for promoting their highest felicitie and welfare? would

he thus have set his own peculiar seal to them? would he by such a special voice have called and invited mankind to attend to the instructions of our blessed redeemer without the least caveat given or exception intimated, if he had not been indeed a prophet "approved" of him; an infallible guide and teacher in religion? would he ever have endowed the apostles with that wonderful gift of tongues, the design of which could possibly be no other, than to enable them to disseminate the doctrine of christianitie throughout the different parts and regions of the earth; if that doctrine had been an imposture, if mankind, after all had no concern or interest depending upon it, if it had not been the express intention of his providence by such an extraordinarie method taken to convince them that they had? but I shall here conclude this argument, refering only for some useful illustrations upon it; as well as of the subject in general, which, in the present chapter we have been discussing, to Baxter's *Life of Faith*, Part II. ch. vi. p. 119. ch. vii. p. 127---35. Part III. ch. i. Direct. xiv. p. 183, 4. his *Saints Rest*, Pref. to Part. II. p. 150---53. Brevint's *Saul and Samuel*, ch. iii. p. 40---42. and p. 45. Chandler's *Vindication of the Christian Religion*, Part I. ch. iv. p. 108---47. Middleton's *Prefatory Discourse to his Letter from Rome*, p. 84---88, and p. 103---5. Foster on *Natural Religion*, &c; *Additional Discourses*, &c. Vol. i. Sermon. ii. p. 352. and Bp. Conybeare's *Posthumous Sermons*, Vol. i. Sermon. x. p. 269---307.

C H A P. V.

On the importance of believing christianitie.

NEXT to our inquire into the truth of ^{CHAP. V.} christianitie, naturally follows a question concerning the importance of believing it. You, as some one may be readie to urge, you affirm it to be a divinely-attested religion; and you declare yourself perfectly well satisfied with the evidence that appears in favor of it. it is very well. embrace it then. but what if I cannot see things in the same light. Suppose that after the best researches and strictest examination made in reference to this matter I still remain an infidel upon the point; what will be the consequence? why this our Savior himself has told you. "he, that believeth not, shall be damned." and as the counter-part of this declaration he has assured us, that "he, who believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved." the institution of baptism here spoken of as a solemnitie to be complied with by all, who embrace the christian faith, is more largely recorded by St. Matthew, and in several passages occurring in other parts of the new testament more particularly

particularly mentioned and insisted upon. but the distinct consideration of it will, I apprehend, be with greater propriety introduced in a farther branch of this work. thither therefore we refer it, confining ourselves at present to an inquirie concerning that faith, of which it is only here mentioned as the natural consequence. there was evidently no occasion for inserting the mention of it in the opposite or contrasting clause, or to say, "he that believeth not, and is not baptised;" since the not being baptised altogether as naturally followed upon not believing, as the complying with that institution did upon the faith, that is here spoken of. at the same time the futableness of such a general declaration in the connexion in which we find it is very apparent. in the words immediately preceding, our blessed Savior had been giving his apostles their commission "to preach the gospel to every creature." and in order to raise and invigorate their affection for the appointed service, and to reconcile them more effectually to all the inconveniencies and hardships of it, it is to this effect, that in the words we have been citing he expresses himself. "I have now authorised you to go and preach my gospel throughout the various parts and regions of the world: and think not that I am sending you upon any light or trifling errand. far from it. the salvation and the condemnation of every individual person, to whom you shall address the message I have now delivered to you, is most intimately

mately connected with it." " he, that believeth
" and is baptised, shall be saved ; but he, that be-
" lieveth not, shall be damned." such is our Sa-
vior's expresse and absolute determination, as to the
importance of believing or rejecting the gospel.
but are there not manie difficulties and scruples
readie to present themselves to the mind, upon
hearing a declaration like this from the divine, in-
fallible author himself of our most holy religion?
how, it may be asked, shall we ever reconcile it to
the moral perfections of the sovereign and eternal
Deitie ; that our final salvation should be thus de-
pending, upon that, which does not in it's own na-
ture implie the least resemblance to these perfec-
tions, nor has any necessarie connexion with it? for
" the devils," we are told in scripture, " believe in
" God," without losing any part of their devilish
or diabolic nature. consequently they might be-
lieve in Christ, nay, most probably they do, and
yet remain as much alienated from the divine image
as ever. and most certain it is, that there are great
numbers amongst mankind, who are firm believers
of the gospel, but nevertheless very far from being
imitators of God. and yet what more natural
than to conclude, that a likeness in our minds to
those perfections, which are the highest glorie of
the Deitie himself, should be infinitely more avail-
able than any thing else towards rendering us the
objects of his favor? again ; it may be asked ; is
not that virtue, that moral puritie and goodness,

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in which this divine image consists, upon many occasions and in the most solemn manner declared both by our blessed Savior and his holie apostles to be the very end and design, the ultimate aim and highest scope of the gospel itself? but how can this declaration concerning the importance of faith be made to harmonise with these others, in which such a stress is laid upon the moral temper? does it not seem to furnish men with a very easie substitute in the room of moralitie? if he, that believes, shall be finally saved, why need I give myself any farther trouble about my own salvation, than to ensure my belief? and once more, does not this declaration of our blessed Savior's, it may be objected, tend to create divisions among christians, and to inspire them with the spirit of censoriousness and bigotry? the belief of christianitie in general being here, as it should seem, made necessarie by our blessed Lord himself to our supreme and ultimate happiness; what is it but an imitation of his example in christians to be laying the very same stress, upon such particular opinions of their own, as they apprehend to make an essential part of that belief? is there not much of this spirit actually apparent in the christian world? and may we not well believe, that this declaration has been not a little contributing to encourage it? and on all these accounts must not the authoritie of any religious institution, containing in it a doctrine of this kind, be rendered extremely questionable and dubious? with

with a view of obviating these difficulties we propose, in

The first place, to inquire into the meaning of this declaration,

And then, secondly, to consider, what are those inferences relative to practice and moral life, that can with propriety be deduced from it.

With respect then, in the first place, to the meaning of this solemn declaration made by our blessed Savior; "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned;" we may observe,

First, that our blessed Lord, when he says, "he that believeth shall be saved," may very naturally be supposed to speak of those great privileges and eminent advantages, which would be even at present resulting from the reception of his gospel. the words, saved, salvation, and the like, are by no means necessarily confined in the interpretation or meaning of them to the happiness and glories of a future world. throughout the scriptures of the old testament they are applied indifferently to all kind of deliverances, blessings, or enjoyments, whether present or future, bodily or spiritual, private or public. what wonder then, should they be used to denote the present possession of our christian privileges; those great, those eminent advantages, that singular and most important blessing, relative, not to a merely corporeal or temporal interest, but to our mental felicitie, our final, everlasting welfare?

fare? accordingly in this sense we find them to be actually applied in the writings of the new testament. thus St. Paul declares, that “the grace of God, which bringeth *salvation*, hath appeared unto all men.” in which words he evidently refers to the present privileges of christianitie; and not to the heavenly *salvation*, for that has not yet “appeared,” but is to come. thus too it is, that he expresses himself in his epistle to Timothie; “be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God, who hath *saved* us, and called us with an holie calling.” where undoubtedly his intention is to speak of those excellent means of virtue, which as professors of the christian religion we enjoy, whether we actually improve them or not, so as to have our meetness for the *salvation* and blessings of eternitie promoted by them. in the same kind of language it is that St. Peter addresses himself to the jews; “save yourselves,” or, be ye *saved*, that is by embracing christianitie, “from this untoward generation.” and this must at least have been one thing intended, when he affirms, as we find it recorded in the fourth chapter of the book of Acts, that “there is no other name” than that of Christ, “under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be *saved*.” the apostle has a reference undoubtedly to some *salvation*, that was then actually subsisting “under heaven,” or in this world of ours. and the purport of his assertion is at least partly this; that

that there was "no other name," or authoritie CHAP. V.
then appearing amongst mankind, by which either
the jews could be "*saved*," or freed from the bur-
densome obligations of the ritual and ceremonial
law, or the heathens rescued from that dreadful
state of superstition and idolatrie, in which they
had been for so long a time involved. this was
very remarkably and eminently true with respect to
the jews. the religious dispensation, under which
they lived, had been itself established by miraculous
authoritie. nothing therefore but another religious
institution miraculously attested could release them
from the peculiar obligations of it. natural reli-
gion could in this case give them no relief; it be-
ing one of it's plainest dictates, that the command
of God is to be inviolably adhered to, in whatever
manner it has been promulgated or made known.
so that, as their ceremonies had been once autho-
rised by miraculous attestations, they must have
continued for ever in force, had they not been
suspended and expressly abrogated by a succeeding
institution of religion established likewise upon the
authoritie of miracles. in like manner the word,
damnation, though now almost appropriated to the
miseries of a future world, does by no means ap-
pear to have been always and invariably so used by
the sacred writers. St. Paul, speaking about cer-
tain scruples concerning "meats and drinks,"
which some of the primitive christians entertained,
declares, that he, who had these scruples, and yet
ventured

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ventured to partake of the food or nourishment, which was the object of them, would be *damned*. "he that doubteth," he says, "is *damned*, if he eat." most certainly he did not intend to pronounce such a person in a state of damnation with respect to the future world; since he had himself declared but in a line or two before upon this very subject and on this very occasion, that "the kingdom of God does not consist in these things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holie ghost;" expressly subjoining, "for he that in these things serveth Christ," whatever may be his sentiment or opinion about meats or drinks merely, "is *acceptable* to God, and approved of men." his meaning therefore in this other declaration can be only this; that, when a man does an action, about the lawfulness of which he is not himself fully persuaded, he must necessarily be liable to self-condemnation or the accusations of his own conscience in relation to that action. again, the same apostle, speaking of the Lord's supper, says, that "he, who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh *damnation* to himself." but is this indeed a declaration of miseries to be inflicted in a future world upon every one, who has ever partaken of the Lord's supper unworthily? who then can escape them, that has ever attended upon it at all? who of that number is there, that must not be conscious to himself of his having sometimes done it unworthily; not with that

that fervor of affection, that lively and elevated devotion, that is so naturally suited to the celebration of it? but this is certain, that every one, when he reflects on such unworthiness, must be self-condemned on account of it. though with respect to the *damnation* here particularly spoken of by the apostle; it is evident, that he refers in part however to certain temporal calamities, which had been miraculously inflicted on account of some gross abuse of this ordinance, that, even in those early days of christianitie, had crept into the corinthian church, and which it was highly necessarie in the wisdom of divine providence thus awfully to correct, in order both to rescue the ordinance itself from that contempt and reproach, that might otherways have been thrown upon it, and to restore the celebration of it among themselves to it's original simplicitie and use. St. Peter, speaking of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, says, that "God " turning" them " into ashes, condemned them," or *damned* them; for the original word is the very same with that so rendered in the solemn declaration of our Lord, the sense and meaning of which we have proposed in this chapter to ascertain. *damned* or " condemned" to what? to the dreadful miseries of a future world? this without doubt he might have justly said with respect to the generalitie belonging to these abandoned cities, whose " iniquities" had " cried" so " loud" for the " vengeance" even of the deepest hell. yet this
is

is not what he means. he speaks only of their being "condemned" to "an overthrow;" that is of the present, temporal destruction of their citie. and in our own language we speak of persons "condemned" to povertie, "condemned" to incessant labor, "condemned" to perpetual solitude; be these hardships and inconveniencies the effect either of judicial proceedings, or of any unjust treatment we may be meeting with in the transactions of private life, or of our own voluntarie choice. Now as the opposite to that *salvation*, which consists in enjoying such admirable means of virtue and religion as the gospel affords, we may naturally suppose one part of the *damnation* mentioned in the latter clause of our Savior's declaration, to be that absolute *loss* of all these advantages, which is necessarily incured by a rejection of it. exactly in proportion to the privileges, that are consequent upon the reception of the christian faith, to the consummate excellencie of it's doctrines, to their powerful and efficacious tendencie towards enlightening and purifying the mind of man, promoting our happiness here and our preparation for eternal blifs, must necessarily be the *damage* or detriment sustained, in reference to our spiritual and religious interests, by not giving our assent to it. and this, as we have seen, according to a similar use of the same word upon other occasions, may naturally be expressed by saying, that "he, who believeth not, shall be damned." such a one necessarily

necessarily dooms and condemns himself by his infidelitie to the loss of all those great and eminent advantages, which the gospel would have afforded him with respect to his religious and moral concerns. this, even in the case of those, who had made the best improvement of the religion of nature, or of any former religious institution, that had been miraculously established, must by all, who have a just sense of the infinite importance of the pious and moral temper, and the interesting consequences, that are depending upon everie advancing step we take in it, be deemed a *loss* indeed. but how deplorably fatal a one might it possibly prove to many, who being deeply corrupted in temper, and at the same time most tenaciously attached to those superstitions and idolatries, that had no other tendencie, but to encourage them in their vices, would, as was undoubtedly the real case with respect to vast numbers of the heathen world at the first publication of christianitie, in rejecting the gospel, reject that only remedie, that might have availed for the recoverie of their minds to the sentiments of religion and virtue before their awful summons into the world of spirits. and in the case of all such persons, it might as justly be said by our Savior; he, that believeth not, will “be damned,” as by the phyfician to a patient laboring under some threatening illness, that, if he does not follow his prescriptions, he must die.

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But

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But these reflexions naturally lead us to a second observation, by which the meaning of our Lord's declaration will be still farther illustrated, and appear still more interesting and awful. the observation I refer to is this; that the circumstances of things were such, when the gospel was first published to the world, that there was the greatest probability imaginable, that those, who embraced it, would stand intitled to the salvation of the future and immortal world, and that vast numbers of those, who rejected it, would, according to all human appearances, in consequence of that rejection, as our Lord himself has elsewhere expressed it in relation to this very matter, "die in their sins;" die unreformed and unreclaimed, and consequently sink at death into all those unspeakable miseries and horrors of the world to come, which the principles of religion and the gospel do so assuredly denounce upon the obstinately impenitent and ungodly. christianitie in it's early days had so many and such deep-rooted prejudices to contend with; it exposed men to so much contempt and reproach, and to such a variety of worldly inconveniencies and sufferings, that in such circumstances to embrace and publicly to profess it, was one of the fairest proofs, that could well be given, of probity of mind, integrity of disposition, a love of virtue, a desire to please and obey the supreme creator in all things, indifference to worldly good, and a willingness to renounce even life itself for the sake of a good conscience,

conscience, and in the cause of “pure and undefiled religion.” and, when men of such excellent dispositions, as these, embraced the christian faith, what god-like improvements is it natural to imagine they would make in the christian life and temper? it is no objection to this kind of reasoning, that there were some instances to the contrarie even in this first and earliest age of christianitie, as it appears from the gospel-records, that in fact there were. the probabilitie was, as we have now been stating it. and probabilitie is frequently expressed in scripture by the very same terms, that are made use of to denote absolute and universal certaintie. thus it is said by Solomon, that “the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” it does not always do so; as the indefinite form of expression made use of does of itself implicate. but there is a fair probabilitie in ordinarie, that it will. “he, that loveth pleasure,” says the same wise proverbiast, “shall be a poor man.” this is not universally the case. but in everie particular instance there is the greatest probabilitie, that it will be so. in the same manner it might be our Savior’s intention in the declaration we are considering, to assure his apostles, of that fairest probabilitie there was, that, whenever they made a convert to the christian faith, he would be a man of integritie and worth, an ornament to the interest, which he espoused, and which it was to be their great employment to support and cherish among mankind; and one, who would be

inclined to make the best use of it's doctrines for the improvement of his mind in that universal virtue, by the cultivation and habitual practice of which he would become intitled, according to the terms of that very gospel they were to preach, to the salvation and happiness of the everlasting world. pleasing reflection surely, and full of animating consolation! and, on the other hand, in the same general sense, and still with a view of quickening their zeal and earnestness in publishing the "glad tidings" of the christian doctrine, he assures them, that he, who believeth not, "shall be damned;" that there were great numbers, both in the jewish nation and heathen world, so dreadfully immersed in vice, that there was all possible reason for concluding, that, if they rejected the gospel, no other means would prove sufficient to reclaim them here; and that consequently they must in a future world undergo the damnation of hell.

But, once more, in the third place, this declaration of our Lord's will appear still more interesting and important, and the sense of it be prodigiously heightened by considering, that he not only knew it to be very probable, that those, who, on the first publication of his gospel, embraced it, would be men of virtue and integritie, and disposed to make a just improvement of it, as a means of promoting their eternal salvation, and that many others would by their rejection of it "forsake their own mercies," and become obstinate and irreclamable

clamable even till death in their wickedness; that CHAP. V.
he not only, I say, knew all this to be extremely
probable, but had even an infallible certaintie, that
the gospel, which he was now commiffioning his
apoftles to publish to the world, would be in fact
the means of “bringing many fons unto glorie;”
of inspiring thousands and ten thousands, an inex-
pressible, inconceivable number of mankind, in
every age of the world down to the latest period of
it, with those dispositions and habits of virtue, by
which they would be in a glorious degree qualified
for the salvation of eternitie. he knew this to be
the very design, which it was intended to answer;
and that it would not fail to do honor to that un-
erring wisdom, which formed the plan of it, by it’s
abundant success. it was declared concerning him
in prophetic, that he should “see of the travail of
“his soul and be satisfied.” and it is, in the lan-
guage of pious joy and holie triumph, that we hear
him in his own devotions speaking of “those, whom
“the father had given him,” and who were, ’ere
long to “be with him, beholding his glorie” in the
heavenly and immortal state. this assurance of the
vast number of mankind, that should actually by
means of the gospel be trained up for the joys of
eternitie, no longer to be deferred, than till the pre-
sent “earthly tabernacle be dissolved,” was with the
greatest proprietie, as has been partly hinted in our
remarks introductorie to this discussion, annexed to
that commiffion, which he was now giving his
apostles

apostles to "preach" this very "gospel" itself "to every creature." and may we not believe, that at the consummation of all things, in "that day," that great and solemn day, when "God shall judge the" assembled "world in righteousness," by that man whom he has ordained," this number will appear so large, as well to justify the general expression; "he, that believeth, shall be saved," notwithstanding those many exceptions, that are, alas, to be made on account of such, as even firmly and upon rational conviction believing the gospel, have yet never made the practical application of it to life and temper? all general maxims admit of such exceptions according to a manner of interpreting them universally agreed upon. and of these exceptions too our Savior was with the same infallible certaintie apprized. he knew, that many, even at the first publication of the gospel, as well as in these latter days and the intervening time, would from the most criminal motives; such as the love of pleasure and ease, pride, vanitie and affectation, and even an aversion to that repentance, to which it was intended to excite them, reject it; without lying under the temptation, or apprehending any necessitie to conceal, and consequently not scrupling to avow their disbelief of it. he knew likewise, that, when christianitie came to be corrupted and made subservient to secular views, there would be many secret infidels, who would carry on the most pernicious

icious designs, and act with a most horribly depraved and wicked temper under the mask of believing. and besides all this he knew with equal certaintie, that there would be in everie period of it a prodigious number, even among those who would profess themselves it's disciples, who yet would be far from having the faith spoken of in the former part of this declaration, and who must therefore of course be ranked among the unbelievers specified in the latter. the faith, to which such effects, as we have been speaking of, are in the scriptures ascribed, is not an implicit belief, not a lazie, indolent assent, not a formal profession made in compliance with custom and popular mode, but a lively and well-grounded perswasion of the great truths of religion as exhibited and enforced in the gospel. but what multitudes are there even among christians themselves, that have never attained to this? "is it not possible," says Mr. Howe, "thou
" mayest be a christian, for the same reasons, for
" which one may be a jew, or a mahometan, or a
" mere pagan? as, to wit, education, custom, law,
" example, outward advantage, &c. now, consider, if thou find this upon inquirie to be thy
" case; the motives of thy being a christian admit
" of being cast together into this form of reasoning. That religion, which a man's forefathers
" were of, which is established by law, or generally obtains in the country, where he lives; the
" profession whereof most conduces to, or best
" consists

“ consists with his credit, and other outward ad-
 “ vantages, that religion he is to embrace as the
 “ *true religion*. but such I find the *christian re-*
 “ *ligion* to be to me. Therefore, &c. The pro-
 “ position here is manifestly false; for it contains
 “ grounds common to all religions publicly owned
 “ and professed throughout the world; and sure
 “ all cannot be true: and hence the conclusion,
 “ (though *materially considered* it be true, yet)
 “ *formally considered*, as a conclusion issuing from
 “ such premises, must needs be false; and what
 “ then is become of thy *orthodoxie*; when as to
 “ the *formal object* of thy faith, thou believest,
 “ but as mahometans and pagans do? when thou
 “ art of *this* faith by *fate* or *chance* only, not
 “ *choice* or rational inducement?” See Blessedness
 of the Righteous, ch. xii. p. 227, 8. 8vo. for
 want of a faith, that can give this better account
 of itself, how great the number, even in the chri-
 stian world, that are perishing “ in their sins!” so
 that well indeed might the pious Horneck, ap.
 Fire of the altar, &c. p. 112, crie out; “ o most
 “ patient God, pitie, pitie, that vast multitude of
 “ christian unbelievers!” when these considerations
 are duly laid together, we shall, I fear, have but
 too much reason for concluding, that the sentiment
 contained in the latter part of this declaration might
 with almost equal propriety be expressed in the
 same general terms as the former, “ he, who be-
 “ lieveth not, shall be damned.” and upon the
 whole

whole it appears, that our Savior's design, in thus CHAP. V.
expressing himself, was to encourage and animate
his apostles in the ministration, to which he was
now appointing them, by assuring them of that
ample success, which should attend it; and leading
them into the strongest and most affecting views of
it's importance.

But that we may still more effectually obviate any
surmises, that may seem to lie against the tenor of
such a declaration, let us consider what inferences
relative to practice and moral life are in reason to
be deduced from it.

And in the first place we may observe, that it is
a declaration not affording the least color or pre-
tence for placing any degree of dependance, with re-
spect to the future salvation, upon the mere belief it-
self of christianitie. this belief is indeed here spoken
of in terms, that are strongly expressive of it's im-
portance. but whence is that importance derived?
why solely from the design and tendencie of the
gospel, as a most admirably-adapted means of pro-
moting, in the heart of man, that virtue and pietie
which alone can qualifie any human creature, any
rational being or moral agent for the favor and ap-
probation of the almighty. and exactly of the
same importance as the gospel is in it's own nature
for answering this end, is the actual and personal
belief of it to every one in particular; because
with respect to any individual, this end can be no
other ways effected, than in consequence of his own
S immediate

immediate and personal belief of it. "the gospel," as Mr. Howe, *ibid.* well comments upon the apostle, "is the power of God unto salvation to everie one that believes; to them that believe it not, it signifies nothing." but then, how does the gospel, or how does the belief of it conduce to our moral improvement, but as a means to be by ourselves applied and made use of for that end? and what are means unapplied and unimproved? in all cases to any useful or salutary purpose unavailing. and in our moral concerns they can only enhance and aggravate our guilt.

Neither, secondly, does this declaration of our Lord's give any natural occasion for the severe and uncharitable censures, which some are apt to pass universally upon those who do not embrace the gospel, or who have never heard of it. the design of our blessed Savior in making it, was to point out the vast importance of that religion, which he came into the world on purpose to introduce and establish amongst mankind; its importance, as a most admirably efficacious method formed in the counsels of infinite benevolence and unerring wisdom for promoting the practice of righteousness and all goodness. still however a capacity for moral agency did not begin with the publication of the gospel, but is founded upon human nature itself. it may therefore subsist where the gospel is not known, or being known is disbelieved. but a state of moral agency necessarily implies a power of being

ing virtuous, tho' not always of being corrupt and degenerate. we cannot suppose any one incapable of being virtuous, without releasing him at the same time from the obligation of being so. as therefore a christian, notwithstanding all the eminent privileges, which in that character he enjoys, may be the vile and ignominious slave of inordinate and vicious passions, so may the disbeliever of the gospel, whether in a heathen or a christian countrie, notwithstanding all the disadvantages he labors under in consequence of his unacquaintedness with it, or of his not discerning the force of it's evidences, be a man of integritie and virtue. and whenever such instances are really occuring, let it be remembered, that we have then the authoritie of scripture, as well as of reason and nature for inverting the proposition, and for saying, " he that believeth," even though he may have been baptised, " shall be " damned;" " but he that believeth not shall be " *saved.*" for it is a christian apostle who declares, that " God is no respecter of persons, but in everie " nation, he, that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." and it is the great " author" himself of our holie religion, who assures us, that " he, who knew his Lord's will, " but prepared not himself, neither did according " to his will;" he that enjoys the very best advantages for the knowlege and practice of religion, yet lives unobservant of it's rules and precepts, " shall " be beaten with many stripes;" he shall for this very reason be subject to a greater number.

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But how easie is it, in the third place, to be perceived, that by a declaration of this nature the gospel is in the strongest manner recommended to the most diligent attention and impartial examination, both of him, who professes it, and of those, who for the present renounce it? either to reject or embrace it inconsiderately, is most unnatural and egregious trifling. it's pretensions, it must be allowed, as this declaration imports, are very great. it's aspect, I think, none can denie to be very inviting. the truth of it is at least much to be desired. and he must be either strangely ignorant or perverse, who does not allow, that there are, upon the lowest estimation, some strong presumptions in favor of it. to discard it therefore in mere levitie of mind or wanton affectation, or to entertain any unfavorable or unfriendly opinion of it, without having ever seriously inquired into the real ground of that opinion, is a conduct not to be reconciled to any maxims either of prudence or religion, integrity, or benevolence. but then, on the other hand, of what use can the mere profession of it be, while no time or thought, no pains or studie are employed in forming clear and just apprehensions concerning it's truths and principles, it's evidences and foundations, and for rendering such topics familiar to our minds? or how can we other-ways account for the little influence, which it now has upon the temper and conversation of those, who embrace it, and for that prodigious and amazing

ing difference in this respect between it's primitive professors and ourselves; but by this undeniable fact, that they embraced it upon personal conviction, and made it the subject of their habitual and most serious meditation, and that we are apt to call ourselves christians, without knowing what we mean, or why we do so; or so much as allowing ourselves to think of any obligation, that we lie under to be acting after some different manner? but let us at length remember, while we call upon the rejecter of the gospel to examine it carefully, impartially, and in the spirit of seriousness and sobriety, that the very same duty, founded upon the tenor and high import of a declaration like this from the mouth of the divine Savior himself, is incumbent upon us, as well as upon him. and, should we be alike chargeable with having indolently neglected it, what reason shall we have to urge against our coming under the same condemnation? of such lasting and universal use do we find to be this so memorable and noted asseveration towards reminding us of the high and sovereign importance of the christian scheme, awakening our attention to it's doctrines and principles, establishing our belief of them upon a sound and rational foundation, and on all these accounts rendering it the more effectually conducive to those moral views; which by every recollection of the sentiment we shall naturally be led to contemplate as the great and ultimate end in christianitie. a reflexion,

flexion, with which we cannot be too intimately conversant; since it is from these final aims, and it's happie tendencie to effectuate them, that all it's excellencie and importance must be derived. they must therefore be the surest test of any particular doctrine, that may, under the sanction of it's alleged authoritie, be proposed to our reception, and the only safe criterion or rule, by which to judge as to any just or salutarie influences, that it may have had upon our own mind and temper.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK

B O O K II.

C H A P. I.

*On the præ-existence and original dignitie of our
blessed Savior.*

THE personal dignitie of our blessed Savior CHAP. I.
in a state of præ-existence with the eternal
father, is one of the most evident, the most de-
lightful, and the most important doctrines in the
whole system of christianitie. but evident as it is,
it has been disputed ; delightful as it is, it has sel-
dom been considered in any other view, than as a
topic of controverſie and debate. and in the heat
of contention, though it's importance has indeed
on all ſides been taken for granted, there is reason
to apprehend, that thoſe pious and moral uſes, to
which it may with ſo much force and propriety be
applied, and which alone can make it to be a point
of any moment at all, have been in a great mea-
ſure

sure overlooked. in treating therefore upon this subject I propose, in the

First place, to shew in general, that our Savior had an existence prior to his appearance upon earth.

Secondly, to point out the high qualitie and super-eminent dignitie of this his præ-existent and original state; and then specifie, in the

Third place, the several practical and important inferences, that are naturally to be deduced from those discoveries, which the gospel has made to us concerning this glorious and truly divine person.

First, we are to shew in general, that our Savior had an existence prior to his appearance here upon earth. this is what St. John seems directly to have asserted, when he says, "*in the beginning* was the "word." he had evidently in his eye the same expression as made use of by Moses, in the first chapter of his book of Genesis: "in the beginning "God made the heavens and the earth." that is, when the world began to be, it did not rise into being by chance, but by the creating power and forming hand of Deitie. at this beginning then, that is, at the creation of the world, according to the doctrine of St. John, our blessed Savior was existing. and as an undeniable proof of this doctrine he affirms the world to have "been made "by him" as the instrument and agent of the supreme creator in the formation of it. "all "things," he says, "were made by him; and "without

“ without him was not any thing made, that was
“ made;” consequently, not this earth, which we
inhabit. that St. John in this discourse is speaking
of a real person specified or characterised by the
term, “ word,” and not, as some have supposed,
of the perfect reason or unerring wisdom of the
deitie, is evident from his applying throughout the
whole tenor of it, to the “ word” here spoken of,
such modes of expression, as do in the plainest
manner implie personalitie, and are constantly made
use of to denote it. when he says of this “ word,”
“ *the same* was in the begining with God,” the
original word here rendered *the same*, is that very
identical one so rendered in the seventh verse of that
very chapter, and applied to John the Baptist. So
again; “ *he* came unto *his own*; and his *own* re-
“ ceived him not.”---“ and the word was made
“ flesh,” that is, took upon him a corporeal state,
“ and dwelled among us, and we beheld *his* glorie,
“ the glorie as of the *only-begotten* of the father,
“ full of grace and truth.” “ John bare witness
“ of him, saying, this was he, of whom I spake:
“ he that cometh after me is preferred before me,
“ for *he* was *before* me.” certainly, if the evan-
gelist is not here speaking of a person, we must
be for ever at a loss to understand the plainest ex-
pressions that language can afford. “ the word”
is evidently in the new testament, in the same
manner, as “ the lamb of God,” “ the Son of
“ man,” the bright and the morning star,” and

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other

On the præ-existence and original dignitie

other expressions of the like nature; "the word," I say, is evidently one of the titles or appellations given in the new testament to the Lord Jesus Christ. and it seems to have been founded upon those passages of the old, in which it is said; "by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," by his creating mandate. as according to the doctrine of the new testament Christ was the person, by whom this word or creating mandate was put in execution, this term, "the word," may with a peculiar emphasis be applied to him, as a name expressive of that high character and office, which he sustained. it might likewise be intended at the same time to denote, that other character; his being in so extraordinarie a manner the reveler of the divine will, and of the principles of pure, infallible truth to mankind. with respect however to the præ-existence of the person thus denominated, what else could John the Baptist mean, than to assert it, when he declares in reference to him; "he that cometh from above is above all things?" Christ, it was undoubtedly his intention here to say, came from heaven, and was consequently, beyond all comparison, the greatest person, or "above all," that ever appeared upon earth. certain of the jews cavilling at something, which our Savior had just been saying, put this question to him; "thou art not yet fiftie years old; and hast thou seen Abraham?" to which he replies; "before Abraham
"ham

“ I am was, I am ;” or, to avoid the apparent impropriety of language in our rendering of the passage, and according to the like use of the original word upon other occasions ; “ I was.” would this have been any answer at all, if our Savior had not spoken of his own personal existence, and asserted it to have been prior to that of Abraham ? when he says to the disciples, “ I came forth from the father, and am come into the world ; again I leave the world, and I go to the father,” does he not as plainly assert his descent from heaven, as his future ascension thither ? how else can we possibly understand our Savior, when he speaks of “ ascending up, where he was *before* ?” yes, says Enjedinus, we may. though perhaps nothing can better serve in proof of this as the true and proper interpretation, than the pains he has taken to convince us, that it is possible to understand it otherways. he tells us then very gravely, in the first place ; “ that our Savior both might and did, after the speaking of these words, *ascend* other places, where he had *not* been before. as for instance, *the back of the ass* on which he rode into Jerusalem, the palaces of the chief priests at Jerusalem, of the Roman governor, of Herod, and others.” nay, more, as he informs us, the scripture actually speaks not only of our Savior’s ascending into heaven, but also of his ascending or going up to Jerusalem, to a mountain, into the ship, to the river side.” it cannot therefore, as these observa-

tions seem intended to intimate, be infered merely from the term ascension, either that heaven is the place here spoken of, or that the words, "where he " was before," are to be literally understood. " and since, as he goes on to tell us, Christ has not distinguished the place, but spoke only in indefinite language, it must needs, he says, be too rash, nimis temerarium, to confine the sense of the passage to any one in particular. but granting the place here spoken of to be heaven, still however he tells us, that the præ-existence contended for will not from hence be apparent, for pious men are said to be in heaven, and to have their conversation in heaven, even while living upon earth, refering to Eph. ii. 6. Phil. iii. 20. again he observes, that a person may be said to be in heaven, who is so by divine præ-destination, though not yet actually inhabiting that world. Christ therefore was before his nativitie, by the decree of God, in that place, where afterwards he ascended in person." however, if this does not satisfie, he has "another answer" at hand. and that too, as he observes, "according to the proper and strictly literal sense of the terms. for what, says he, I beseech you, is it that our Savior here affirms? why, that he had been in heaven, before this conversation passed. and was he not now about thirtie-two years old? and surely in all this space there must have been time enough, even after his nativitie, for his having been in heaven, either really or in mental ecstasie, after the manner of St. Paul

Paul or St. John." "it is no objection, he tells
us, to a supposition of this kind, that the scripture
says nothing about it. since St. John has expressly
informed us, that our Saviour both said and did
many things not recorded by the evangelists." Vid.
Enjedin. Explicationes de Trinitate, p. 214---17.

Other particular passages of the same kind
might without any difficultie be produced, but
these I hope may suffice in proof of the point
before us. and there is indeed one general ar-
gument to be drawn from the writings of the
new testament, which does, I think, of itself
alone undeniably establish the præ-existence of
Christ in the heavenly state, as an indisputable
doctrine or principle of the gospel. and it is this.
his appearance here on earth is constantly spoken of
by the evangelists and apostles as an act of humili-
ation in him and wonderful condescension. but, if
he had not been previously existing, it could have
been no act at all of his. or had that been possi-
ble, yet what humiliation or abasement could there
have been in becoming an inhabitant of this world,
in the case of one, who had never had an existence
before? we have therefore only farther to observe
under this head, that, as it is the general doctrine
of scripture, that our Savior had an existence be-
fore his appearance in this world, and even before
the creation of it; so likewise before the creation of
any other world, or of any other created being
whatsoever. for by him not only this world of
ours,

ours, but all things else were produced into being, his own derivation only from the supreme source and origin of all existence excepted. accordingly he is expressly said in scripture to be "the first-born of everie creature," or as some would interpret the apostle in the passage I refer to, to have been "born before all creation."

Let us now procede to consider, in the second place, the high qualitie and super-eminent dignitie of this his præ-existent and original state. and from what has been already said we may in some measure conclude it to have been a state of inconceivable perfection and honor. for if, as seems probable, dignitie of nature does in the scale of rational beings correspond to prioritie of existence, how inexpressibly great and glorious must be that person, who is the "first-born of everie creature;" who existed before angels and arch-angels, and who was absolutely and strictly the first and earliest emanation from the eternally active power and energie of the supreme, eternal mind! so likewise, when we find it to be the doctrine of scripture, that our Lord Jesus Christ was the person, by whose instrumentalitie and agencie the soveraign creator produced the intire system of the universe, we cannot but entertain the most exalted idea of the natural dignitie and original perfection of a being, who was thought worthy to be invested with an office so amazingly venerable and illustrious. an office, in comparison of which all the most elevated

vated stations of this world, together with the highest and noblest ministrations, that even the brightest among the heavenly host can be engaged in, must sink into the almost empty and insignificant shadow of greatness. accordingly the scripture in direct terms, and with great varietie of expression, represents our blessed Savior, as approaching by the dignitie of his person the nearest, that is in nature possible, to the absolute perfection of the supreme and infinite Deitie himself. most remarkable to this purpose are his own words, as we find them recorded in the writings of the evangelists; in which he so plainly speaks of himself, not only as a being of superangelical dignitie, but also as the very next, in elevation of character and perfection of being, to the one God and father of all, the peerless majestie of heaven and earth. “ of “ that day and hour,” meaning the day of judgment, he says, “ knoweth no man,” or rather no one; “ no not the angels, that are in heaven, nor “ the Son,” the Son of man Christ Jesus, though so much exalted above them, “ but the father “ only.” had not our Lord most certainly known, that there was no other being throughout the whole extent of nature more eminent than himself, the great origin of all being alone excepted, he would without doubt, and in consequence of the perfect and most exemplarie humilitie of his character, have expressed himself in this declaration after such a manner, as to have intimated the possibility,

fibilitie, that there might. or had he known, that there was in fact any such superior being existing, could he have failed, meek and lowly as he was, to have introduced upon this occasion the mention of him? in like manner is our blessed Savior described in the epistle to the Hebrews as being "the
 " brightness of the father's glorie and the express
 " image of his person." and on account of this near and most intimate resemblance, which he bears in the dignitie and perfection of his nature to the soveraign mind, the eternal source of all excellencie and perfection, he is styled by St. John in the beginning of his gospel, "God;" a divine person in a sense inconceivably and inexpressibly glorious and exalted. and can we hesitate in the least concerning the full proprietie of this appellation, as given to him, whom all "the angels of God," upon his coming into the world, and taking upon him the office of *mediator* between an offended Deitie and his offending creatures were called upon "to
 " worship;" when even these very angels, are elsewhere styled Gods, nay, the office of a magistrate in this world, as our Savior himself has in relation to this very argument observed, denoted by the same term? so far ought we to be from scrupling the language, that we are, on the contrary, expressly to remember, whenever we apply this title or ascription to the great redeemer, that we ought to do it in a sense incomprehensibly higher and more exalted, than that, with which it
 can,

can, with any propriety or justness of sentiment be applied even to the first and chief among any of the angelic orders. thus then have we endeavored to exhibit, as briefly, but yet as clearly as we could, the scripture account of our blessed Savior's amazing and incomprehensible dignity, "as the only " begotten of the father, full of grace, and full of " truth, who was with him from the beginning." and in these sentiments we find the very earliest of christian writers to be unanimously concurring. " Consider," says Ignatius, in his Letter to Polycarp, animating him to steadfastness and resolution in the christian faith, " consider the times, look " forward to the coming of him, who is above " time, without time, invisible, yet for our sakes " became visible; impalpable, impassible, yet for " our sakes became liable to suffer and actually " endured all things; *τον ἀχρονον, τον ἀορατον, τον δε* " *ημας ορατον, &c.*" Vid. Ignat. ad Polycarp. Edit. Vossii, p. 12. " our God Jesus Christ," *ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός* is the language of the same apostolic father in his epistle to the Ephesians, p. 27. and in that to the Magnesians, p. 33, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, he adds, " who before ages (*πρὸ αἰώνων*) " was with the father, and in the end appeared." " than whom" says Justin Martyr, speaking of the Logos or Jesus Christ, " we know of no sovereign " next to the parent-Deity (*μέλα τὸν γεννήσαντα Θεόν*) " more just or truly royal." Vid. Apol. prim. p. 17. Edit. Thirlb. and in the same apologie, p. 52,

it is thus that he expresses himself; "the first
 " power in nature next to or after that God, who
 " is the parent and Lord of all, μετα τὸν πατέρα πάντων
 " καὶ δεσπόζων Θεόν, is the Son or Logos, concerning
 " whose incarnation and becoming man, we shall
 " speak hereafter." so again in his second apo-
 " logie, p. 133. "next to or after God, we chri-
 " stians," says he, "adore (προς κυνῶμεν) and love
 " the Logos and word of the unbegotten and in-
 " effable Deitie, since for our sakes he became man,
 " and that by a participation in our sufferings he
 " might heal us." and in his Dialogue with Try-
 " pho, he speaks of our Savior as having "existed
 " before the moon or the morning star." and in
 the second part of that Dial. p. 408, and 411, he
 affirms him to be Θεόν, τὸ μόνον καὶ ἀγεννήτη καὶ ἀρρήτη Θεῶ
 υἱόν "God, the Son of the one unbegotten and
 " ineffable Deitie;" and styles him Θεὸς Θεῶ υἱος,
 " God the Son of God." and on what account
 it is, that he thus invests him with the style and
 character of divinitie, is evident from his first Apo-
 logie, p. 94, where he observes, that "being the
 " first-born Logos, or word of God (λόγος πρωτότοκος
 " ὢν τῷ Θεῷ) he is also God; (καὶ Θεὸς ὑπάρχει) who hav-
 " ing before appeared to Moses and the prophets
 " in an unembodied form, did at length become
 " man." full to the same purpose is the language
 of Irenæus upon this head. thus lib. ii. adv. hæres.
 ch. 55. p. 185. Edit. Grab. speaking of our Sa-
 vior, he says, that "having been always co-existent
 " with

“ with the father, he has always been the reveler
 “ of him.” *semper co-existens patri---semper*
revelat patrem. and lib. iii. c. xxiii. p. 252,
 he observes it to have been the prediction of the
 ancient prophets, “ that it was not a *mere* man by
 “ whom we should be saved, nor yet by an unin-
 “ carnate being,” *neque homo tantum---neque sine*
carne. and in the same chapter his expression is ;
 “ God was made man ; *ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ ἐγένετο.*”
 in like manner, lib. iv. c. xi. p. 282. “ Christ,”
 he says, “ is God with the father of the living,
 “ who spoke unto Moses and reveled himself to the
 “ Patriarchs.” *ipse igitur Christus cum patre vi-*
vorum est Deus, qui locutus est Moyfi, qui & pa-
tribus manifestatus est. and very remarkable in
 order to our forming a right idea of his meaning
 in these passages is the observation he makes upon
 those words of our Savior insisted upon above.
 “ if any one,” says he, “ should inquire the rea-
 “ son, why the father communicating all things to
 “ the Son is yet declared by our Lord alone to
 “ know the day and the hour ; he will find none
 “ for the present more suitable, more becoming, or
 “ less dangerous, *neque aptabilem magis neque*
 “ *decentiorem, nec sine periculo,* than this ; that as
 “ our Lord is the only true teacher, we might
 “ have it from his own mouth, *discamus per ip-*
 “ *sum,* that the father is above all.” he immedi-
 ately adds, for he says, “ *the father is greater than*
 “ *I.*” upon the whole then we may conclude

with Justin Martyr, Dial. p. 261. that as "Christ
" is called God, so he is God and will be God."

Θεὸς καλεῖται καὶ Θεὸς ἔστι καὶ ἔσται. at the same time we cannot but applaud, and most heartily acquiesce in that so catholic and candid sentiment, which in this very Dialogue, p. 333---5, he expresses, when telling his antagonist-jew, that should he not after all be able to relish the doctrine, this ought to be no objection to his becoming a christian, there being some even among the christians themselves, who were not assenting to it. I now go on, in the

Third place, to point out those several useful reflexions of a practical and moral nature, that are to be deduced from those discoveries, which have been made to us in the gospel, with relation to this glorious and truly divine person. , And

First, from our Savior's præ-existence in the world of spirits, we may draw an evangelical argument full of force and conclusiveness in favor of a future state, an argument quite distinct from the general declarations of the gospel upon that head. for our Savior not only affirms, that there is another world, a world of spirits, but often assures us, that he himself had actually been there and lived in it. now consider only; if any creditable man, who had always given me the greatest proof of his integrity, nor ever the slightest reason to suspect it, and who could lie under no possible temptation in the case to deceive, were to inform me, that there was some other countrie here on earth, besides that,
in

in which we live, which, though I had never seen, CHAP. I.
or before heard of, yet he himself had been in ;
should he persevere in asserting this to the last ;
nay, should he perform some very extraordinarie
works in proof of his assertion, which I could no
other ways account for, than by supposing, that he
was in some special manner enabled to do them, on
purpose that he might excite my attention to what
he related concerning this other cuntry ; and did
he on many accounts besides appear to be a person
of very superior knowlege in the affairs of man-
kind, what a strange degree of scepticism would it
be in me not to believe him ? now this is no other
than an exact representation of the genuin evidence
accompanying the declarations made by our blessed
Savior concerning another world. nor is there in
the nature of things any more improbabilitie, that
there should be another world designed for our fu-
ture habitation, than there is, that there should be
some particular cuntry in this, of which we have
never yet been informed. our Savior speaks con-
cerning this world of spirits, without the least
marks of a merely rapturous or a visionarie enthu-
siasm, that was lost in the sublimitie and ardor of
it's own ideas, or of any design to romance. he
speaks of it with as much composure and serenitie
of temper, with as much certaintie of language
and familiaritie of expression, as any other friend
of ours would do in common conversation con-
cerning some distant cuntry, which he himself had
visited

On the præ-existence and original dignitie

visited and been at, though we had not. what objection then could we have to the admitting the realitie of such a world upon our Savior's testimonie alone, and though we had never heard of it before? but, when he only confirms, by his direct and positive assertions concerning his having been in this very world, and expecting soon to return to it, what we had before such probable and strongly conclusive reasons for believing, how easily, and at the same time how joyfully may we acquiesce in the testimonie of so excellent, and whether his prophetic mission be strictly admitted or not, we may at least, I hope, be allowed to add, so extraordinarie a person?

But, secondly, the amazing and inconceivable *dignitie* of our Savior's original and præ-existing state is a strong proof of the *dignitie* of human nature, as well as an argument additional to that we have been deducing from his præ-existence in general in favor of our own future being. what greater honor could have been conferred upon the human species, than the appearance of so illustrious a person upon earth, on purpose to accomplish our salvation? what can give us a more exalted idea of *human* nature, than to think of so august and splendid an embassie undertaken with a particular and special view to the happiness of mankind? of what high account must it be in the councils of heaven, when an office like this was not thought beneath the acceptance of him, "by whom God
" did

“ did in the begining make the world and all
“ things that are therein?” and if heaven thinks
thus highly of us, shall we in contradiction to it’s
supreme, unerring judgment, think meanly of our-
selves? shall we reproach and vilifie that nature,
which even the Son of God himself came into the
world on purpose to recover from it’s degeneracie,
and to restore to it’s original and primitive dignitie;
which in the light of such reflexions how great
must it appear! and these are considerations, that
ought to excite in our minds the deepest abhor-
rence of sin, which is the degradation and utter de-
filement of the human nature; a nature thus ho-
norable in itself, and upon which such high, pe-
culiar honors, as those we have been speaking of,
have been confered in the dispensations of provi-
dence. nor can there, to a christian, be a more
convincing or forcible argument in proof of a fu-
ture state, in which this original dignitie of
our nature will be advanced to it’s utmost height
of excellencie and perfection, than the appearance
of so great and exalted a person, as our blessed
Savior, upon earth, for the accomplishment of our
redemption. would a being of such superlative ex-
cellencie, of such high and præ-eminent rank have
come into the world, deputed by the supreme “ fa-
“ ther of spirits” himself, only to die for dying
men; for those, who were in so little a while to
perish, and be no more, for ever? what proportion
would there have been between so wonderful an
expedient,

expedient, and the short duration of the very best and most important effects, that could upon this supposition have possibly arisen from it? But,

Thirdly, the amazing dignitie of our Savior's person, that original, essential dignitie of being, by which he so far surpasses the highest of the angelic orders, is a most natural and striking illustration of the majestie of God, and ought therefore to affect our minds with a most reverential sense of his presence and fear of offending him. to think of God, as that being, "in whom we ourselves do live and move and have our existence," to whose laws we are unalterably subject, whose will we are bound in all things to obey, to whose appointments and disposal we are under the strictest obligations absolutely to submit, and upon whose pleasure our happiness must be for ever depending, is in itself an idea deeply awful. but how is the grandeur of it increased, when we applie the same reflexion to the whole human species; to the intire race of mankind, that do, that have existed, or that ever will be living, upon this spot of earth! how prodigiously is it heightened still, when we direct our thoughts to heaven, and comprehend within the very same state of subjection and dependance everie individual of the angelic host! but, beyond all this, how much more amazingly grand and awful must be our ideas of the divine majestie, when we read in the scriptures, on the one hand, of the personal glories of the Lord Redeemer, of the super-angelic dignitie

dignitie of his nature, of his being the “bright-
“ness” of the supreme father’s infinite perfections,
and yet are told in the same sacred page, that he is
“the servant of God,” that he came into the
world, “not to do his own will, but the will of
“God, who *sent* him;” when we hear him pay-
ing his homage before the seat of the divine ma-
jesty, and offering his humble supplication to hea-
ven, saying; “father, if it be possible, let this cup
“pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but
“thine be done!” thus admirably is it, that the
gospel enforces those reverential thoughts and senti-
ments of the great, eternal Deitie, which, when
duly possessing our minds, cannot fail of being
attended with the most beneficial consequences,
with respect to the moral regulation and govern-
ment of our affections. “who shall not fear thee,
“o Lord, and glorifie thy name,” o thou, who
art not only “the king of saints,” the sovereign
of angels, but the “father” also of our Lord
Jesus Christ, and his, as he himself has taught us
to say, “*his* God,” as well as “ours!” since we
have now to add, in the

Fourth place, and for our highest consolation
and joy, that the amazing and inexpressible dig-
nity of our Savior’s original rank and character
“with the father” is altogether as clear and as
lively an illustration of the abundant goodness and
matchless benevolence of the Deitie, as it is of his
superlative majesty and greatness. the discoveries,

X

which

On the præ-existence and original dignitie

which have been made to us by the gospel upon this article, directly tend to enlarge and aggrandise our ideas of the system of the universe, and consequently of the benevolence of it's author. how vast the distance between the dignitie and worth of the most illustrious among mortal men, and the incomprehensibly bright and exalted character of the great Redeemer! and according to the universal analogie of things we cannot but conclude, that this mightie chasm must needs be filled up, and the scale continued by beings still rising in the splendors of their original nature, and in moral puritie of disposition towards the still superior glories and perfections of the Son of God. thus does the tendencie, and, as it were, the combination both of things and persons towards universal good appear more conspicuous, giving us the fair and lovely prospect of such an immense aggregate of felicitie to be the result and final issue of the whole, as will illustrate through all eternitie, and to the view of admiring worlds and adoring angels, the richness of the supreme father's benevolence, "of whom, "and to whom, and through whom are all things." considered in another view likewise, and that peculiarly adapted to impress the human heart, the superlative dignitie of our blessed Savior's rank and character in the universe carries in it a noble and striking proof of the loving-kindness and tender compassion of the great "father of mercies" and sovereign fountain of everie good. for, notwithstanding

standing this his high præ-eminence in the scale of intellectual beings, such was the goodness of the great creator, that “ he spared not even this, his “ only-begotten Son, but freely gave him up for “ us all.” I speak in the words of St. Paul. and what can be more natural, than the inference, which he immediately deduces from this amazing phænomenon in the divine, universal government ; “ how “ shall he not with him also *freely* give us all “ things ?” what can be too great, too magnificent, too liberal to expect from a sovereign Deitie thus rich in benevolence and compassion ! how welcome should be everie such additional illustration of the divine goodness to those, whose happiness is wholly depending on it ? and how much more welcome still to those, who, not solicitous only for their own salvation, are interesting themselves with cordial affection in the welfare of universal nature ?

Fifthly, in that amazing degree of moral perfection, which is ascribed to our blessed Lord, even in his original and præ-existent state, and in consequence of which he is said to be the “ express “ image of the father’s” spotless and infinite purity, we have a very clear and convincing representation given us of the progressive nature of virtue. for notwithstanding this height of moral dignitie, which belonged to his original and native character, yet did even he, this “ only-begotten of “ the father, learn obedience by the things which

“ he suffered ;” and “ by his sufferings was he
 “ made perfect.” and in consequence of this ac-
 cession of merit it is, that he has been exalted to
 that throne of glorie, which he now possesses. well
 then may we suppose the improvement of our
 minds in virtue and in a resemblance to Deitie to
 be the employment of eternitie. for after millions
 and millions of ages spent in this moral progress,
 how vastly shall we fall short of that perfection of
 character, which belonged to our blessed Savior
 “ from the begining ?” and yet, as we see, was
 even this capable of increase.

In the last place the dignitie of our Savior’s per-
 son carries in it the strongest enforcement of that
 “ message,” which he came into the world on
 purpose to deliver to mankind. “ thousands and
 “ ten thousands” of the angelic host are continu-
 ally surrounding the footstool of the divine pre-
 sence ; any one of whom might have been sent
 into the world to inculcate the very same princi-
 ples and doctrines, that were declared and pub-
 lished by our blessed Savior, and to perform the
 very same miracles, that were wrought by him in
 attestation of their truth. but “ God so loved the
 “ world,” that, instead of commissioning any of
 these to execute this embassie of grace and mercie
 to the children of men, he sent for this purpose
 his only-begotten Son into the world, the most glo-
 rious person, that could possibly have appeared in
 it. and what can we imagine to have been the
 ultimate

ultimate design of this divine procedure, if not to inculcate more forcibly the principles and obligations of the gospel, and to give us a deeper and more effectual sense of their importance? or how could these ends have been better answered than by such a measure as this in the œconomie and order of providence effected? “o the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” how long may we contemplate them ’ere we become fully sensible of their admirable perfection and consummate beautie! yet, if we do this seriously and in the integritie of our souls, how soon may we see enough of them to excite in our minds the most fervent sentiments of gratitude and love towards the great father of all; and to render our violation of his laws absolutely inexcusable? particularly in relation to our present subject how unable soever we may be to form a full and accurate idea of it, or to exhibit it in it’s highest dignitie and splendor, yet this is certain, that, if so great, so glorious, so divine a person has appeared in our world, on purpose, that he might “teach us to denie ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world, to purifie us to himself, that we might be a peculiar people zealous of good works, and to render us partakers of the divine nature;” these must needs be matters of supreme importance to our happiness and

and falvation. “ this is my beloved Son; hear
“ ye him;” was once the voice from heaven:
and it is so still. “ and if the word spoken by
“ angels was stedfast, and everie transgression and
“ disobedience received a just recompence of re-
“ ward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so
“ great falvation, which at first began to be
“ spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us,
“ by them, who heard him?”

C H A P. II.

On the incarnation of Christ.

WE have in the preceding chapter been taking CHAP. II.
 some such imperfect survey, as the present
 dim and feeble state of our understandings will
 permit, of that amazing and transcendent glorie,
 which our blessed Redeemer had “with the father,
 “before the world was;” of the original and na-
 tive honors of his præ-existent state. we have now
 a very different scene before us. we are now to
 “see” that “Jesus made a little lower than the
 “angels,” whom then we were viewing as incon-
 ceivably exalted above them. “made a *little*
 “lower than the angels.” thus it is, that the au-
 thor of the epistle to the Hebrews expresses him-
 self. and let us observe by the way, how in this
 manner of speaking he dignifies the human nature,
 at the very time, when he is insisting upon our
 blessed Savior’s wonderful humiliation in becoming
 a partaker of it. by being born into this world,
 he was “made lower than the angels;” yet it
 was but a *little* lower. the incarnation of Christ,
 is a miracle, which we could have no sufficient
 reason

reason for believing, were it not for the authorities of those many other miracles of so different a nature, the truth of which hath been by very sufficient and satisfactory evidence ascertained. and upon this footing it becomes altogether as credible, as any of those other facts or doctrines, which being peculiar to the gospel we admit upon the testimony only of these other miracles. in one respect indeed there is nothing more incomprehensible, or seemingly incredible in the incarnation of our blessed Savior, than in the birth or incarnation of any other man. the human soul itself being totally and essentially different from the body, and from every thing, that is material, there can be no greater difficulty in supposing, that a corporeal system may be actuated by that sublime spirit, the logos, or the divine word, than in supposing the like to be effected by the agency and presence of some such inferior spirit as ours. however it is neither the miracle, nor the mystery, but the moral of this fact, which we are chiefly concerned in. and it is upon this principle, that I here propose to treat of it in the following manner.

First, I shall insist upon some observations in relation to the incarnation of our blessed Savior, as it may be in some measure necessary to attend to, in order to our apprehending aright, in what manner the dignity of his person and the excellency of his character were affected by it.

Secondly,

Secondly, I shall shew the necessitie there was for it, in order to the accomplishment of the divine purposes in the dispensation of the gospel, and the great benignitie and wisdom of divine providence, that are apparent in it.

After which I will point out those practical uses, that are to be made of the subject, and without attending to which, all our speculations and decisions upon it will be fruitless and unavailing.

First then, let us insist upon an observation or two, with respect to the incarnation of our blessed Savior, which it may be in some measure necessarie to attend to, in order to our apprehending aright, in what manner the dignitie of his nature and the moral excellencie of his character were affected by it.

And it is to be observed, in the first place, that this his wonderful appearance upon earth was undertaken according to the will of the supreme father, and in subserviencie to the views of his free and boundless benevolence. this is a sentiment highly necessarie to be attended to, if we would form such ideas upon the subject, as shall best consist with the moral perfections of the sovereign mind. for the honor of these we ought in imitation of God himself “ who will not give his glorie “ to another,” to be above all things jealous. and the more so, as upon this very article nothing has been more common in the christian world, than to advance such principles, as have a most direct and

On the incarnation of Christ.

fatal tendencie to derogate from and to asperse them. according to some of these representations one might be almost apt to imagine, that our Savior's design in coming into the world had been to depose the father of the universe, to usurp his throne in the heart of man, to divert our reverence, love and affection from the sovereign ruler of the world, and to fix them ultimately upon himself. with what care and industrie is everie circumstance of terror, all those ideas of cruelty, wrath, furie and implacable revenge, that have the directest tendencie to excite horror and amazement, fear and aversion, collected together, formed into a character, and then ascribed to the supreme father and Lord of all? on the other hand everie thing mild and gentle, forgiving, tender, compassionate and endearing, is summed up into one most lovely and attractive idea; and this is the character given to the great Redeemer, in direct contradistinction from that severe and rigorous one just now described, and imputed to the sovereign creator. glorious indeed and inexpressibly great was the benevolence and love of our adorable Savior. but in what do these glories of his character consist? not surely in his being more propitious and compassionate, more friendly and readie to forgive, than the supreme father himself, but in his being, on account of these most excellent qualities, that adorn it, in so high, so eminent and so illustrious a manner the "image," the most complete resemblance of that
divine

divine goodness, which is still supreme. considering how much this maxim has been forgotten, we may perhaps justly look upon it, as one distinct part of the wisdom of God displayed in the dispensation of the gospel, that our blessed Lord should, upon so many occasions, and in such express and solemn language, speak of himself as coming into the world in obedience to the will of his father, and with the design of fulfilling the purposes of his grace and love. these passages are, it is to be presumed, familiar to our thoughts. they are however of too much importance to be omitted in treating upon this subject. and the recollection of them must needs be highly pleasing and acceptable to the piously-affected mind. hear then the devout and godlike Savior thus expressing himself; "I came not to do mine own will," not mine own will only, or as the chief motive of my appearance; "but the will of him who *sent* me." hear him declaring, that he "*must* work the work of him that *sent* him, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." hear him in his most solemn acts of devotion insisting upon this great truth, and saying, "this is life eternal to know thee the *only* true God, and Jesus Christ, whom *thou* hast *sent*." and in this view of the matter, so far are we from derogating from the moral excellencies of our Savior's character, that it does in realitie greatly enhance them. for by coming into the world, in obedience to the will of

God, his incarnation was at once an act of piety and humble homage paid to the supreme father of the universe, as well as of the highest benevolence and compassion to mankind. but this naturally leads us to a

Second reflexion upon this subject, which is, that his coming into the world to execute the will of his father, was on his own part purely voluntarie. and this is a remark alike necessarie, in order to our doing justice to the character of the great Redeemer in reference to this wonderful transaction, as the former in order to our judging aright of the benevolence and grace of our heavenly father so richly displayed in it. had not our Savior's appearance in the world for the redemption of mankind been with his own intire consent and approbation, what praise, what thanks, or honor could have been due to him on that account, or what foundation for those heavenly glories, that have been conferred upon him in reward of it? and certainly as a free and moral agent he might have refused to come. but as the scheme of our redemption originally flowed from the boundless compassion of the sovereign and eternal Deitie, so the execution of it was most willingly and joyfully undertaken by him, "in whom dwelled all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" especially that full and most resplendent image of the divine benevolence, which shone forth so conspicuously, when "the word was made flesh and dwelled among us."

this is what our Savior himself has so strongly expressed, when he says, "my *meat* is to do the will of my father, who is in heaven, and to finish his work." and on this foundation well might the apostle say, "ye know the grace," ye know the wonderful compassion "of the Lord Jesus, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his povertie, might be made rich."

But what may this expression of the apostle mean; though "he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor?" was the Son of God then by his appearance among men really deprived of any of the honors belonging to his original and præ-existent state? did he by his incarnation sink in the scale of intelligent and rational beings? some such questions as these we may naturally enough suppose to be suggested by a review of this subject. and it is in answer to them that I would observe in the

Third place, that our Savior's being "made flesh and dwelling among us" did not implicate any the least degradation of him from his original rank and character in the universe or the smallest diminution of the splendor and glories belonging to his præ-existent state. a sovereign prince does by no means lose or renounce the dignity of his princely name, when he condescends to enter some of the humblest cottages of his subjects. nay even in such a visit he has it in his power

power to give very sufficient tokens to others of his royal character. in like manner, when the only-begotten Son of God appeared in our world, not one ray of his heavenly glorie was by that means annihilated. in the very lowest state of his abasement here upon earth it was as true of him, as in any the remotest period of past duration, that he was “the brightness of his father’s glorie, and “the exprefs image of his person.” and it seems to have been the very design of St. John in the verse immediately following that in which he assures us, that the “word was made flesh, and “dwelled among us,” to enter a particular caveat against any contrarie sentiment upon this head. “the word,” he says, “was made flesh, and “dwelled among us; and we beheld his glorie,” not as an ordinarie inhabitant of this world, not as a mere man, but “as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” nay, so far was our blessed Savior from losing any part of the inherent majestie of his nature in consequence of his incarnation; that by it, on the contrarie, it was in the most glorious manner illustrated and rendered more conspicuous still. for the highest glorie of everie moral agent consists in the perfection of his moral character. and how signally, how eminently was this highest perfection, the highest that even the most exalted natures are capable of being possessed of, displayed, when the Son of God himself became an inhabitant of this world, the companion

nion and associate of sinful, frail and dying men, that men might become the “sons of God, and “partakers of the divine nature!” and this leads us to observe once more, in the

CHAP. II.

Fourth place, under this particular, that, though our Savior retained, even during the whole of his incarnate state, all the original honors of his præ-existent one, his becoming incarnate was nevertheless an act of the most amazing humilitie and condescension. in the case of the sovereign prince just now mentioned visiting the poor and lowly cottager in person, and for the sake of conferring some most desirable and important benefit upon him, is not the condescension admirable, and apparent, though the dignitie be still confessed? but inexpressibly greater would have been that of our blessed Savior, allowing the preceding argument to remain in it's fullest force, even supposing him to have appeared in this world with all the splendor and magnificence of imperial majestie itself? how much greater then must we believe it to have been in fact, when we consider, that he was born and lived and died in the very lowest state of povertie and earthly abasement. in circumstances, I say, like these, was he born; in circumstances like these did he live and die. for that, which greatly heightens the idea of our Savior's wonderful condescension in becoming incarnate, is, that it was not a transient visit paid to the children of men, but a continued state. and this is what St. John seems to have intimated, when he

BOOK II.

he not only says, in a passage, that has been already cited, that "the word was made flesh," but that he *dwelled* or resided amongst us. and thus much may, I hope, suffice for the illustration of our first particular, and for explicating the manner, in which our blessed Savior's dignitie and character were affected by his incarnation.

Let us now procede to consider, in the second place, the necessitie, that there was for it, in order to the accomplishment of the divine purposes in the dispensation of the gospel, and that wisdom and benignitie of divine providence, which are apparent in it. there is no doubt to be made, but that, in order to the revelation of the very same truths, that are now contained in the gospel, our blessed Savior might have assumed some luminous bodie of amazing splendor and dignitie appearing from time to time in the heavens, or descending upon the earth, that he might have proclaimed his laws by the sound of an arch-angel's trumpet, and have wrought his miracles at the head of myriads of the heavenly host. and in this manner some may be apt to imagin, that the gospel would have been much more efficaciously promulgated, than by his appearing in a human form, and in the lowest condition of human life. and it is something of this kind, that the captious pharisees seem to represent as necessarie, when they demanded "a sign from heaven." they could not pretend to denie the wonderful works, that were performed by our
blessed

bleſſed Savior *upon earth*. but they imagined, or at leaſt pretended to imagin, that there was ſome kind of ſplendor and dignitie wanting either in the manner of performing them, or elſe in the nature of the miracles themſelves; which might juſtly be expected, whenever the Meſſiah, that moſt illuſtrious prophet of God moſt high, ſhould appear to execute his important commiſſion to mankind. and it muſt be owned, that by this pompous manner of publiſhing the goſpel to the world, many objections, that are now made to it, would have been effectually excluded. “ can any good thing “ come out of Nazareth?” “ is not this the car- “ penter’s ſon?” with other queſtions of the like nature, would in conſequence have been never heard of. but then it would have been liable to objections of another kind; and at the ſame time we muſt have been deprived of many great and ſingular advantages, which are wholly depending upon the particular manner in which it was actually introduced and eſtabliſhed, namely by the incarnation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. ſuch a magnificent and ſplendid appearance, as that we have been ſpeaking of, would have ſo much dazled the eyes, and captivated the imagination of it’s beholders, as to render them much leſs capable of attending either to the miracles themſelves, or to the great and ultimate purpoſes, which they were intended to answer. there would in this caſe have been ſome better pretence for objecting the deceptions of fan-
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cie, as well as of the senses. and consequently in this method the credibilitie of the gospel would have been diminished instead of being increased. and it may, I think, be left to everie one to judge, whether the apostles were not much more likely to convince the world of the truth of it by going into the different regions and kingdoms of the earth, and proclaiming, that by the "man" Christ Jesus, by one appearing in the human form and nature, conversing intimately and freely with all sorts of men, and associating with them in everie place of resort, the sick were healed, the blind restored to sight, the hungrie miraculously fed, and the dead raised out of their graves, than by reporting, that at stated times and upon frequent occasions some august and heavenly form appeared, attended with a splendid retinue of the angelic choir, with audible voice and with everie circumstance of pomp, publishing the truth of the gospel, and causing the most stupendous miracles to be wrought upon the earth itself in attestation of it. to a thoughtful and attentive mind it will be evident, that there is more of real dignitie and grandeur in the miracles themselves, that were wrought by our blessed Savior, than could possibly have been in any external circumstances, however splendid and pompous, that might have accompanied the performance of them. at the same time how admirably well-adapted that condescending and familiar manner, in which they were performed, and the doctrine they were designed

signed to enforce, inculcated, to engage the coolest attention of mankind, to conciliate their affections, and thus to give the gospel a far more insinuating and operative influence upon our minds, than could otherwise have been effected. it is an established rule in the art of persuasion or human eloquence, not to deal altogether in dignitie of thought, sublimitie of diction, or majestie of expression, but to intermingle somewhat of the familiar, and to address the soft and tender passions of humanitie. may I be allowed to say, that it is in this very method the supreme Deitie has addressed himself to man by the gospel of his Son? in the great truths it contains, in the stupendous miracles, that were wrought in attestation of them, there is the utmost grandeur and sublimitie. at the same time in our Savior's taking upon him the human form, his submitting to everie condition of human life, his conversing freely and familiarly among mankind, and with those of everie rank and station, there is all that engaging condescension and tenderness, which it must be next to impossible for ingenuous minds to resist. and in this his humiliation there is something peculiarly well-adapted to engage and win *our* affections as men, and consequently to quicken our attention to those great truths and principles, which he has recommended to our consideration, as of the utmost moment and importance. it was not only in the general idea of it an act of the deepest humiliation for our sakes submitted to, but

BOOK II.

properly, and in the most peculiar notion of it, consisted in assuming the very form and nature of those, whom he came to save. "he took not on him the nature of angels;" that would have been a most amazing stoop! "but he took on him the seed of Abraham, and was born of a woman." what an honor was this conferred upon our natures! how gloriously was it dignified, when "the word was made flesh!" how can we do otherwise than in gratitude comply with the obligations of a religion, that has been thus signally endeared to us! if the Son of God, that illustrious being, who is called so in a sense so far beyond that, in which the appellation can justly be applied to any other being whatsoever, and who is therefore stiled "the only-begotten of the father," if he "was not ashamed to call us brethren," what amazing insolence must it be in us, to be ashamed of one another on account of any of those comparatively slight and inconsiderable distinctions of external condition, that can be subsisting between man and man? and what disingenuitie of temper must it necessarily implie in us, to be ashamed either of the truths of his religion or of regulating our life and conduct by it's maxims, however contrarie this may prove to the modes and customs either of a profane or an unthinking world? besides, had the gospel been published in any other manner, than that in which it was in fact made known to the world, where would have been all the singular

singular advantages of our Savior's pure and spotless example? where the benefits arising from his death and passion? such then are the important purposes answered by our Lord's incarnation, and which could not have attended any other method of promulgating the gospel. in these therefore there was the height and the perfection of dignitie, for in all actions whatsoever, whether human or divine, there is dignitie most conspicuous, where there is the greatest appearance of benevolence, and of wisdom operating in subserviencie to it. and as the christian religion was in the ultimate views of it intended to promote the highest good of mankind, so likewise was the manner fixed upon in the counsels of divine providence for introducing it into the world of all others the best adapted for rendering it really effectual to this purpose. and in these reflexions we easily see the proprietic of that great stress, that is frequently laid in the evangelical writings upon this particular topic, our Savior's being in all things "made like unto us," sin only excepted. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin," on account of the corruption and degeneracie of mankind, "*condemned* sin in the *flesh*:" by this very method did the supreme Being in the most effectual manner awaken men's attention to it's deformitie and turpitude, to it's baseness and miserie, and thus quicken them in their endeavors after the highest attainments in the contrarie habits of moral puritie

ritie and virtue. and thus we are naturally led, in the

Third place, to point out those practical uses that are to be made of this subject; and without which all our speculations upon it will be fruitless and unavailing.

And first in the general from the whole of what we have been saying under the immediately preceding particular we learn, in how peculiarly strong and persuasive a manner the obligations of christianitie have been enforced upon us. with such consummate wisdom is the gospel-scheme contrived, that it interests everie power and everie affection of our natures in the cause of virtue and religion. the important principles it inculcates relative to our own immediate, our present, our everlasting happiness are calculated in the highest degree to rouse and awaken our self-love and to put it upon pursuing it's aims after the manner, that shall be most effectual for the accomplishment of them. that fair and natural evidence, which accompanies it, strongly recommends it to our reason; and the investigation of it's principles and truths is an employment in the happiest manner adapted to the dignitie and peculiar office of our intellectual powers. the miracles, that were wrought in favor of it excite a pleasing admiration, and are in the special nature of them adapted to astonish us, not into stupidity, fruitless ecstasie, or busie curiositie, but into attention and seriousness. the superlative dignitie

dignitie of "the author and finisher of our faith," CHAP. II.
as the only "begotten of the father, full of grace
"and full of truth," strikes us into reverence and
awe. and what can more powerfully operate upon
the tender or the grateful affections of our natures,
than his becoming incarnate for our sakes? how
desirable then must be it's universal reception in the
world? how careful should be those, who profess
it, in adhering to it, according to it's genuin and
unadulterated simplicitie? how inexcusable must
we be in not giving it so much, as a free and im-
partial examination? but, how much more inex-
cusable still, if believing it, if understanding it,
we remain nevertheless "in the gall of bitterness
"and in the bond of iniquitie?"

Secondly, the wonderful condescension of the
Son of God, in becoming an inhabitant of this
world, has a natural tendencie to reconcile us to
the condition of humanitie, and to all the natural
hardships and difficulties of our present being.
how great the complaints, that have in everie age
been made by mankind upon this very article?
atheism has been chiefly founded on them, and
where the understanding is not corrupted in this
way, the temper often is. such is our pride, that
we are sometimes prone to look upon the necessarie
labors and occupations of life, as beneath us. and
such our love of ease and pleasure, that we think
it to be cruelty in providence, that this world has
not been constituted a perfect paradise of effemi-
nate

nate delights and soft indulgence. but can that be a condition of being beneath the dignitie of our natures, to which the Son of God himself submitted? can it implie any defect of benevolence in the divine providence, to have placed us in a world like this, when so great, so glorious a being became an inhabitant of it without losing the smallest share in that divine complacencie and love, with which he had been blessed and glorified before the foundations of it were laid? if he for our sakes condescended to all the conditions of humanitie, shall we be unwilling to submit to them for his? or shall we not rather joyfully embrace them with the generous purpose of promoting his interest among mankind, and of honoring it by our examples? besides, our blessed Savior, as we have seen, notwithstanding his humiliation in becoming incarnate, retained all the essential dignitie and honor, of his original and præ-existent state. in like manner may we, though sojourning in this world, yet live above it, and have "our conversation in heaven."

Thirdly, in our Savior's incarnation we have a most forcible and striking example given us of condescension and humilitie in everie office of love towards our fellow-christians. For what is there, which we can so denominate, that is to be compared to the abasement, to which he for our sakes submitted, when he "was made flesh and dwelled among us?" particularly in imitation of this example

On the incarnation of Christ.

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example are we to think no condescensions beneath CHAP. II.
us, by which we may become instrumental in promoting the salvation of men's immortal souls; but, on the contrarie, to look upon it, as our highest honor to be co-operating with the great Redeemer in this god-like design, whatever outward abasement or seeming indignitie we may by this means incur.

C H A P. III.

On the example of Christ.

BOOK II.

IN pointing out the moral uses of our Savior's incarnation treated of in the preceding chapter, we have considered it, as a most wonderful instance of condescension, that is to be by ourselves imitated with the greatest possible exactness in the exercise of our own charitie and benevolence towards one another. but it was one of the chief and principal designs of this very incarnation itself or appearance of the Son of God in our world, to set before us in his succeeding life an example at large, and to exhibit a complete and spotless model of everie virtue. and in this particular consists one of the main excellencies and highest glories of the gospel, as distinguished by it's peculiar advantages from the primitive religion or unassisted light of nature. accordingly there is nothing, of which we are in the gospel-writings themselves more solemnly reminded, or more particularly called upon to attend to. "take my yoke upon you," says our Lord himself, "and learn of me;" meaning, as appears from what immediately follows, not the principles and

and doctrines of his religion, though these also are to be learned from him, “the author and finisher of our faith;” but the virtues of his example. “let the same mind,” says the apostle to the Philippians, “be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” and it is thus that the same inspired teacher of christianitie has upon other occasions expressed himself; “if any man,” so it is that this apostle in writing to the Romans declares, “have not the spirit,” that is, the temper “of Christ, he is none of his,” no true and genuine disciple of Christ, nor the object of his approbation. “Christ in you,” such is his language to the Colossians, that is, the temper of Christ possessing your own hearts, “the hope of glorie.” “of whom,” addressing himself to the Galatian converts, he says, “I travel in birth again, till Christ be formed in you;” that is, till in the habit and disposition of your minds you become more complete imitators of all his god-like virtues. once more we find the same apostle in the epistle likewise to the Romans, affirming, that “whom” he, the great, eternal mind, “did foreknow, “them he did predestinate to be conformed to the “image of his son.” what is the plain and obvious meaning of this declaration, but that God in the original plan of his universal providence determined to bestow the privileges of the gospel-dispensation upon those, who to his own unerring wisdom and infinite foreknowledge appeared the

On the example of Christ.

properest among human kind, to be invested with these privileges, and that the very design of bestowing them, was, that by their influence and effect the persons thus favored might be “con-
“formed to the image” or the example “of his
“Son.” “for such an high-priest,” says the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, “became us,” it was an admirable illustration in particular of that divine wisdom displayed in the whole œconomie of the gospel, “such an high-priest became us, who
“was holie, harmless, undefiled and separate from
“sinners.” “leaving us an example,” says another apostle speaking of our blessed Savior, that we might “follow his steps, who did no sin, neither
“was guile found in his mouth.” and to complete this enumeration, it is by yet another of these inspired teachers observed, that “he, who says, he
“abideth in him,” everie one professing to be a christian, ought himself also “to walk, even as he
“walked.” such is the stress laid upon the imitation of our Savior’s example both by himself and by his holie apostles. and in farther treating upon the subject it is proposed,

In the first place, to consider more distinctly the nature of that example, which is in the life and conduct of our blessed Savior delineated and displayed.

Secondly, to point out the many great and peculiar advantages arising from the exhibition of such an example, and the indispensable obligations,
which

which as christians we lie under to the imitation of it. and from these particulars we shall deduce a farther reflexion or two upon the subject.

Let us, in the first place, a little consider the nature of that example, which our blessed Savior has set before us. in general it is looked upon by christians and represented in the scriptures as being absolutely, and in everie respect a perfect one. but in order to the perfection of an example three things are requisite. it must be an illustration of everie virtue: it must be adapted to everie condition of human life: and it must be uniform and of the same tenor throughout the whole of it. and to each of these characteristical particulars, that of our blessed Savior will be found in the exactest degree corresponding.

In the first place, a perfect example must needs carrie in it a clear and conspicuous illustration of everie particular virtue. and is not this eminently and undeniably true of that exhibited in the conduct and life of the great Redeemer? thus,

In the first place, his pietie, devotion and love towards the sovereign Being, was in the highest degree shining and exemplarie. it appears in that constant readiness and alacritie, with which he executed the orders of his will. and he himself seems to take a peculiar pleasure in representing those important acts of benevolence towards mankind, which run through the whole series of his life and actions, in this distinct peculiar view, and

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as so many instances of obedience to the great creator and sovereign Lord of all. thus, when his disciples would have persuaded him, after a very fatiguing journey to eat of the provisions, which they had procured for his refreshment, and stood wondering at his refusal, he tells them in the language of pious chearfulness, and with all the genuine sentiments of a manly and exalted devotion; "I have
 " meat to eat that ye know not of:" "my meat" the inexpressible joy and pleasure of my soul, that which is it's highest and most delightful entertainment "is to do the will of him, that sent me, and
 " to finish his work." by thus representing the sovereign Deitie, as the original former of the scheme of gospel-salvation, from whom he himself had received commission and authoritie to execute it, it seems to have been his express intention, dictated by the strongest sentiments of devotion, love and reverence towards him, to impress his followers with the thought, and to fix it deeply in their minds, that by this means the undiminished tribute of gratitude and praise might be by all ascribed to that infinitely benevolent and most gracious being, to whom he himself was ever careful to offer up the sacrifice of humblest adoration, of the most enlarged and devout thanksgivings. this is very remarkably illustrated by the manner, in which he so often expresses himself, with respect to those miraculous operations, which added such a peculiar lustre and dignitie to his appearance. far
 from

from performing them in the spirit of ostentation ; far from any fondness of having the ultimate glorie of them ascribed to himself, he seems to be particularly sollicitous in suggesting sentiments of a different nature. when a leper, whom he had instantaneously cleansed, returned to give him thanks, he declines the offered tribute of praise ; and in the reflexion, which he makes upon that occasion, expresses himself thus ; “ were there not ten “ cleansed ; but where are the nine ? there are not “ found, that returned to give *glorie to God*,” “ save this stranger.” in like manner having at the resurrection of Lazarus, and in the most solemn act of adoration, thus addressed himself to heaven ; “ father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me,” he does in direct terms assure us, that it was with this express intention he did it ; “ that the people, “ who stood by, might know, that *God* had sent “ him ;” that he acted by commission from God, and that from him, it was he had received the power of giving so illustrious an attestation to that prophetic character he assumed. how often likewise do we read of his withdrawing to some distant, silent and solemn retreat for the purposes of devotion and prayer ? in these recesses, we may, from the other parts of his character, well conclude, that the pious exercises of his mind were at once and in the highest degree sedate and rational, elevated and intense. but it is not natural to imagin, that he who did with so much earnestness, and with such

such great severitie, rebuke that spirit of ostentation and hypocrisie, which discovered itself in the public devotions, or rather in the public appearances of devotion, so much affected by the pharisees of those times, should himself have often given the opportunitie for others to be the immediate witnesses of that life and spirit, of that warmth and vigor, of that sinceritie, fixedness and constancie, with which he engaged in, and carried on the acts of religious worship and adoration. one thing however is observable upon this head, and particularly worthie of being attended to. and that is, that he did not, out of a weak or a pretended fear of incurring the censure, either, on the one hand, of hypocrisie, or, on the other, of superstition, absent himself from the places of public devotion, at the customarie and stated seasons of it; or ever discover the least indifference, with respect to these external institutions of religion. he perfectly well understood the true nature of religion, as being a principle or disposition of the mind. he needed not to be informed, that all external services bearing the name and character of religious, derive their worth and value solely from their being the natural exercise and gratification of the devout and virtuous temper, and the tendencie there is in them to promote it. yet he did not from hence infer, as some with so strange an inconsistency have seemed to infer, that such services were to be contemned, or meanly thought of, but
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for the sake of such highly useful and interesting purposes, which they are calculated to effect, to be respected and honored. accordingly they are in the clearest manner recommended to our regard by the express authoritie of his example, it being thus recorded of him, that, “when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as his custom was,” and stated, uniform practice, “he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day.”

But, secondly, how pure and disinterested, how strong and fervent was his benevolence and love to mankind! when the circumstances of our corrupted and fallen race had rendered an external and miraculous promulgation of religion in the highest degree expedient and desirable, and the sovereign being having in his infinite benevolence determined to bestow this important blessing upon mankind, he cheerfully undertook the execution of the divine scheme, though a necessarie part of it was his own humiliation and deepest abasement; his quitting the realms of heavenly light and splendor, his becoming an inhabitant of this inferior world, and being exposed, during his residence in it, to everie kind of indignitie and sorrow. accordingly “in the fulness of time” he did in fact appear, animated with a steady, undaunted benevolence, and bringing salvation with him. with what indefatigable zeal, with what unwearied ardor of spirit did he propagate and instill the heavenly truths and doctrines of his religion! those doctrines, so admirable

rable in their grand design, in their direct, immediate tendencie, to rescue an ignorant, vain, deluded world, from the tyrannie of superstition and wickedness, to beautifie the temper, to adorn the soul of man, to lay the foundation of inward tranquillitie and peace, of substantial happiness and joy in the present life, and to prepare us for the fullest and most glorious communications of the divine love in a future and eternal one. or if we attend to those works of extraordinarie and miraculous power, which he performed, while here upon earth, we shall find, that excepting in one or two particular instances, in which the kind intention is not so immediately apparent, they were all of them obviously and undeniably of the most benevolent and friendly nature. whilst they proved, with an evidence so unexceptionable, the authoritie of his mission, as the prophet of the most high, they did at the same time, in the most forcible manner, express the benevolence and love of his god-like mind. this is beyond exception evident, from that beautiful abstract or epitome, which he himself has given us of them in the answer, which he returned to John the Baptist, inquiring by his messengers, whether he were, or not, the Messiah. “ go and
 “ shew John again the things which ye do see and
 “ hear:” “ the blind receive their sight, the lame
 “ walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the
 “ dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel
 “ preached to them. and blessed is he, who so-

“ ever shall not be offended in me.” neither were these acts of beneficence and charitie confined to any particular set of men, to a few surrounding favorites, to a little circle of friends or relatives, or to his own countrymen the Jews, but “ he “ went about doing good” to all. the Syro-phœnician and the Samaritan both found favor in his sight: the miraculous bountie of his hands, the divine instructions of his mouth are communicated with an unconfined and universal goodness. and so far was he, either from studiously shuning any occasions of doing good, or from making an imprudent use of them, that he did, on the contrarie, both assiduously seek, and in the wisest manner improve them. this is evident, as from many other instances, so particularly from those answers, which at one time or another he gave to the various questions, which were proposed to him. some of these were ensnaring and malicious, others of them merely curious, if not rather impertinent. but whatever the question was, never did he fail in answer to convert it into a means of communicating some useful and important instructions. thus did he join to the “ innocence of the dove, the wisdom of the serpent ;” a union, without which even benevolence itself may in some instances be as productive of unhappiness and miserie, as could have been even the directly contrarie dispositions of malignitie and spite. of such essential importance is a prudent direction of our actions, in order to

manifest the just sinceritie of our good affections. the like generous spirit he discovered towards those, who "persecuted," calumniated and "despite-fully used him." though he "was holie, harmless and undefiled," he met with those, who scorned and insulted, who reviled and hated him. and even innocence itself had enemies. and it was with the perfection too of innocence, that he treated them. when expiring upon the cross, with what a sincere and fervent good-will did he pray for those who had brought him to it, saying; "father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" when he commissions his apostles to enter upon their public ministrations in preaching the salutarie truths of the gospel, he expressly enjoins it upon them, that they should "begin at Jerusalem;" that very place, where in his own person and preaching he had met with such ungrateful contempt. nor did the Son of God even disdain to weep, prompted, as he was to it, by the generous sentiments of a sympathising tenderness. so far was he from affecting that insensibilitie of temper, which some, ignorant of the true greatness, are apt to look upon as being the only mark of a robust and manly spirit. and as our Savior was thus sensibly affected by the miseries and follie of others, so likewise was he extremely tender of their reputation and character, and sometimes reproved his disciples for being otherwise. he was never guiltie of detraction. never did he say a severer thing of any

any one, when absent, than what he would say to his face. a most excellent example, as in him proceeding from a noble generositie of disposition; though it may be in some measure imitated, so far as relates to the mere external conduct, from a very different principle: that downright insolence I mean and arrogance of temper, which makes a man to be ashamed of nothing.

The next thing remarkable in our Savior's conduct, is his great and exemplarie humilitie. upon this head we have unavoidably anticipated such reflexions, as would otherwise have naturally belonged to it; the greatest instances and proofs of his benevolence being likewise the strongest proofs of his humilitie and condescension. some farther illustrations however of this particular must not be omitted. the twelve disciples, who were his immediate followers and daily companions, were persons comparatively of low and inconsiderable rank in life. yet with these he conversed in the most affable, free and courteous manner. and whilst in manie respects, they betrayed the slowness of their understanding and difficultie of apprehending, he condescended to their weakness, and instructed them, "as they were able to bear it." nor did he ever refuse to enter into such conversation, as was at once free, but yet respectful, with any others, though of the meanest rank, when any valuable and benevolent design might be answered by it. and, when he would in the plainest and most affecting

fecting manner inculcate upon his disciples the important dutie of loving one another, with what readie and chearful condescension did he first wash and then wipe their feet? and from the whole of his conversation upon earth it appears to have been with the strictest propriety said of him, "that he " was meek and lowly of heart." these very words indeed being his own, and spoken concerning himself, some perhaps may be readie to object to, as an instance of the contrarie, an instance of self-commendation and applause. but we are to remember, that he was now speaking in the character of a divine prophet. and in that character it was one part of his commission, to urge and to enforce the imitation of his own example, purposely exhibited, as the model of our conduct. so that considered in this particular view there could be no more impropriety or indecency in his saying this of himself, than in inculcating any other branch of doctrine or moral instruction upon mankind.

But let us now reflect a while, in the fourth place, upon that self-denial and abstinence, with respect to the enjoyments and gratifications of this present life, which appear so conspicuously throughout the whole of our Savior's continuance upon earth. " while the foxes had holes, and the birds " of the air had nests, the Son of man had not " where to lay his head ;" but willingly abridged himself of many of the conveniencies of life, and endured

endured many of it's greatest hardships, for the sake of promoting, after the most effectual manner, the grand design and ultimate views of his appearance amongst mankind. I say *willingly* abridged himself. for such was his popularitie, that the "people would have taken him by force, to make him a king." most certainly therefore, had he not himself declined it, both he and his disciples might have been much more plentifully provided with the accommodations and satisfactions of life, than in fact they were. nay, this very proposal itself of "making him a king," he might, if he had thought proper, and by that miraculous power, with which he was invested, have actually put in execution, defeating whatever opposition could have been made to it. thus he himself observes upon another occasion, that he might have "prayed to the father, and he would have sent him more than twelve legions of angels" to have rescued him out of the hands of his enemies. and indeed upon this whole subject, and in order to illustrate in a proper manner the high perfection of our Savior's moral character, it is of the greatest importance to recollect, that "the spirit," the power of working miracles, was given to him, as it is expressly affirmed by the evangelist, "without measure," without any limitation or restriction, as to the use of it. this was left to his own free and absolute choice. and what can possibly furnish us with an higher idea of the consummate excellencie.

excellencie of his character, than the use, which he did actually make of such an amazing and stupendous power, in everie exertion of it, full of humilitie, full of benevolence; never employing it, for his own ease, accommodation or grandeur, but always with a reference to the welfare and good of others. never did it produce the slightest expression of resentment on account of the indignities that were offered him. but carrying this high, magnificent prerogative continually about him, he nevertheless suffered himself to be treated, as if he had been the meanest, most insignificant, and worthless among men. but these reflexions naturally lead us to a farther particular belonging to the present topic of inquirie. and that is,

His perfect submission and patience, under all the sufferings, which he endured. a submission, not consisting in stupid insensibilitie or stern indifference, but in nobly bearing the afflictions of life, even whilst he strongly felt them. a submission truly virtuous and amiable, by being founded upon just apprehensions of the divine nature and providence as infinitely good, and of the ends to be answered by his sufferings, as of the utmost importance to the welfare and happiness of mankind. that these were indeed the true and genuin properties of his submission and patience, must evidently appear from the manner, in which he expresses this temper, both in his addresses to God and in his conversation with men. “o, my father,” such is the language

language of his devotions, "if it be possible, let
" this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not, as I
" will, but, as thou wilt." and again: "o, my
" father, if this cup may not pass away from me,
" except I drink it, thy will be done." and when
his follower and disciple, St. Peter, with his usual
warmth, was proceeding to methods of severitie
against his surrounding enemies, he calmly rebuked
him, saying, "the cup, which my father has given
" me, shall I not drink it?" nor is there any
thing in what we have recorded concerning his
agonie in the garden, that can justly be thought to
imply any defect in this spirit of devout and hum-
ble resignation. for what was the occasion of it?
not surely the prospect of his death upon the cross.
this can scarce be thought likely, it being appa-
rent, that our Savior did at least shew in other in-
stances the common fortitude of a man. and even
this has supported thousands within the nearest
views of dying by a death altogether as painful, as
that by crucifixion. and this is still more unlikely,
and to the last degree improbable, if it be farther
considered, in what an extatical and triumphant
manner he had just before been speaking of that
heavenly glorie, to which he was so soon to be re-
ceived after his sufferings and death, and as the re-
ward of his obedience in submitting to them.
"father, the hour is come; glorifie thy Son."
"in my father's house are many mansions, I am
"going to prepare a place for you." "I have
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“ finished the work, which thou gavest me to do ;
 “ and now, o father, glorifie thy Son.” it is utterly impossible, that any one having in view such glorious prospects as these, so very soon to be accomplished after the suffering scene was over, should be in an agonie of blood on account of that scene itself. we must therefore suppose, that the occasion of this agonie was, not the apprehension or view of approaching death, but the strong sense, which our Savior had of the follie and wickedness of him, who betrayed him, and of those who intended to crucifie him ; and the prospect of the little improvement in comparifon, that would be made of the sufferings he was then going to endure, of the vast numbers, who would reject that gospel, which he was then about to seal with his blood, of those, who would abuse and corrupt it, even under color of the highest zeal in it's defence ; and of the still greater number, who professing it, though they would not indeed take any pains to pervert it, so neither, on the other hand, to make any religious or moral use of it. in this view the agonie of our Savior, instead of being any impeachment of his character, is in realitie an illustration of it's excellencie. it was the agonie, not of fear, not of cowardice, but of benevolence, and of a most tender and intense concern for the happiness of mankind, and for the prevalence of that righteousness and virtue, by which alone it can be secured. and that our Savior had no formidable apprehensions of his

his death, which he had long fore-saw, is undeniably evident from the manner, in which he expresses himself concerning it, as we find this particular represented by St. Luke. "I am come," he says, "to send fire upon the earth. and what will I, if it be already kindled? I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened, till it be accomplished!" words, so far from implying any reluctance at the thought of his death and passion upon the cross, that, on the direct contrarie, they express the eager, and almost impatient desire he had, by this concluding scene, to give the fullest testimonie, both of his obedience to his heavenly father, and of his benevolence to mankind. and what could express a more perfect composure or absolute serenity of mind, than the transactions even of the cross itself? so far from indicating there any hard or gloomie apprehensions of the divine providence, that he says in the language of intire resignation; "*father*, into thine hands I commend my spirit:" so far from indulging any passionate resentments towards man, that he prays, as we have seen, with the utmost earnestness and affection, for his bitterest and most malicious enemies; those very enemies, who had contrived and brought about his death. when he was insulted by the offering to him of gall and vinegar to drink, not a single word of indignation did he utter. he likewise, when upon the cross, addresses himself to his beloved disciple, St. John,

without any other emotions, than those of tenderness and friendship, in relation to that intimately affecting article, the care and protection of his mother, when he himself should be no longer resident on earth. in short, throughout the whole of our Savior's demeanor upon the cross, there appears the same perfect serenity, the same intire self-possession, the same absolute composure of mind, as in everie other scene of his conduct whatsoever. and indeed how difficult, or rather how absurd to imagine, that he, who when dying upon the cross, could give to one, who was suffering with him there, the most express and solemn assurances of his being with him immediately to enter into "paradise," should at the same time be under the power of any disquieting or reluctant passions? such then were the principal circumstances attending this wonderful scene. and from this brief survey of them we may, I think, certainly conclude; that, when in these, his final sufferings, our Savior cried out, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," this was not the language of complaint or dejection, but of admiration and astonishment; astonishment at the stupidity, the perverseness, the wickedness of those, who, through envie and malice had inflicted them. it is, as if he had said, "my God, my God," whence can it procede? how comes it to be even possible, that any of thy reasonable and morally reflecting creatures, thy human offspring, should be capable of acting a part like

like this, of totally “forfaking” me, of thus abandoning me to death; *me*, who throughout the whole course of my life on earth, have been endeavoring to promote their highest happiness and everlasting welfare! thus then it appears, that in our Savior’s death, as well as in the immediately preceding circumstances of his life, there was everie thing, that bears the marks, not merely of patience and resignation, but of magnanimitie and fortitude, and of an invincible integritie of mind in adhering to the great ends and purposes of his mission. accordingly there is no part whatever of his example, that has been by the sacred writers more distinctly and particularly recommended to our imitation, than that of his perfect and intire submission to the will of God under the sufferings both of his life and death. and indeed, as this branch of his most excellent and lovely character might very well have been introduced, as an illustration of his pietie towards the supreme Deitie, the resignation of ourselves to his most holie and righteous will being properly an act of pietie; so likewise is it a temper of such high necessitie, in order to a regular discharge of the several duties, which we owe to one another, that it is with equal proprietic to be deemed a social, as well as a religious or a divine virtue. particularly, in relation to the death of Christ, though in the plan of divine providence, there were other most important and momentous purposes in reference to the final
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On the example of Christ.

and everlasting salvation of mankind to be answered by it, which we propose hereafter distinctly to consider, yet is it moreover expressly pointed out to us in the evangelic page, as exhibiting an example of patience, of magnanimity and of inflexible adherence to the cause of truth and virtue, which, as it is our strictest duty, so likewise will it be our highest happiness, to resemble. “for
 “hereunto,” says St. Peter, “were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an
 “example, that we should follow his steps.” and among the sufferings afterwards particularly specified, he mentions his “bearing our sins in his own
 “body on the tree;” that is, his dying upon the cross for the sake of a sinful world, and that he might rescue mankind from the dominion and power of iniquity. so again, in the same epistle, “for as much,” he says, “as Christ also suffered
 “in the flesh,” by which, as appears from the preceding chapter, he means his being put to death, “arm yourselves also with the same mind.” and to the same purpose it is, that St. John has expressed himself in the following words. “hereby
 “perceive we the love of God, because he,” that is Christ, the great Messiah, “laid down his life
 “for us. and we ought also to lay down our
 “lives for the brethren,” or to be at least in temper and disposition prepared, upon every such just and necessary occasion to surrender them. thus then it appears, that in our Savior’s conduct upon
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earth, we have a clear and distinct illustration of CHAP. III.
everie virtue. let us now go on, in the

Second place, to consider it as an example admirably well-futed to everie condition and circumstance of human life. this seems to be a point of very considerable moment, when we are endeavoring to illustrate the perfection of it. had it been an example futed only, in the particular circumstances of it, to the condition of the rich and great, the poor might have inclined to look upon themselves, as excused from any obligation to the studie and contemplation of it, though even upon this supposition it might with great utilitie have been made the subject of their meditations. nay, from it's being thus particularly limited in the nature and circumstances of it they might have been led to presume, that according to the christian scheme, the duties of moralitie in general were not so strictly incumbent upon them, as upon the rest of mankind. on the other hand, had it been an example accommodated to the situation only of those, who are in the lowest condition of outward life, the rich and great might have been induced insolently and vainly to allege, that it was designed only for the instruction of the ignorant vulgar, who might want indeed to be thus tutored into religion, and to have such a plain and familiar sample of it's duties set before them ; but, that, as for themselves they stood in no need of such a method of instruction, being every way qualified for acquiring
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the knowlege of moral obligations, by contemplating the abstract and immediate nature of things in themselves. in like manner; both rich and poor are liable to adversitie and affliction. had the life of our blessed Savior therefore, in either of these conditions, been one continued scene of ease and prosperitie, the mourner must have been for ever destitute of any peculiar benefits arising from the example proposed in it. and, reversly, had it been nothing, but one intire aggregate or sum of woe, what lessons of caution or moral wisdom could it have held out relative to the dangers of prosperitie, and the difficultie of enjoying it aright? so again, had it been an example containing only a general illustration of the severall virtues, that constitute the moral and the christian life, and not of the practice of them in those particular relations and connexions, that are severally subsisting between mankind, we could not but have looked upon it as being extremely defective. for in this very particular, the application, namely, of the general rules of virtue to everie one's special relations and circumstances in the world, lies all the difficultie, that we can possibly be thought to labor under, with respect to the knowlege of our dutie. but in fact, by the example of our blessed Savior, everie man is plainly and clearly taught, how he himself is to act in that peculiar connexion with his fellow-creatures, in which the divine providence has placed him. and in it's being thus happily adapted to all
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the varying circumstances of mankind, and to the special duties of relative life, much of the admirable wisdom of the supreme author and former of the christian scheme is to be discerned.

To begin then with that grand distinction, in reference to exterior and worldly circumstances, of poor and low, of rich and great. that our Savior was truly and properly an example to those, who are in the former of these situations, will be by all confessed. it was that very condition of life, in which, according to the wisdom of the divine counsels, he passed his days upon earth. he was born in a family of no worldly rank or distinction. and to this circumstance those, which attended his education, exactly corresponded. insomuch that some of the people, who heard his excellent instructions, said with wonder and astonishment; " whence has this man letters?" he had no fixed habitation. he enjoyed no worldly possessions by inheritance; and was so scantily provided with any present supplies for the uses of life, that he could not so much as pay a small tribute without having recourse to a miracle. in all his journeyings from one place to another, he traveled after the manner of the meaner sort. and what now in this condition of life was the temper he expressed? it was that of perfect contentment, of devout and humble resignation to the will of God, by which he both owned and honored the divine providence, that placed him in it. it was that of chearful and in-

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defatigable attention to the great work, which he came into the world to accomplish. it was that too of intire and absolute freedom from all envious dispositions towards those, who were enjoying the affluence and splendor of human life. yet in his conduct towards these, there was not the least, that favored of flatterie or abject complaisance, but conscious, that this distinction of rich and poor was a merely external and transient circumstance, he upon all occasions asserted the honors of a rational and immortal being, and the dignitie of an intellectual and moral nature. by these had he borne no higher rank in the scale of beings, than even the poorest of mankind, he would still have been upon a level in that, which constitutes the greatest worth and excellencie of human nature, with the wealthiest and most exalted. and in this instance his example ought to be particularly attended to by those of any inferior condition or circumstances with respect to worldly honors and enjoyments. they are not to think meanly of themselves or the less honorably of human nature on that account. but being the rational and immortal offspring of God, equal in the dignitie and honors of their mental frame to the greatest among men, equally capable with them of participating in the god-like pleasures of virtue and religion, and of being accepted, approved of, and applauded by the most high, eternal majestie of heaven and earth, they are to look upon themselves as indispensably obliged,

obliged, how mean soever may be their worldly condition, to act in a manner suitable to these high prerogatives belonging to them, as creatures moral and intellectual. they are to renounce with the utmost abhorrence and disdain the apprehension, that, because of their lower rank, with respect to outward condition, vice and iniquitie can be in them, but little infamous, nay, almost excusable. they are ever to remember, that by practising those duties of their station, which have just now been mentioned as exemplified in the life and conduct of our Savior, and by the due cultivation and improvement of their mental faculties, they have it in their power to arrive at the highest honor, that any besides of human kind are capable of attaining to. and by thus honoring themselves they will take the most effectual method of being secured from that reproach and contempt, with which many of their rank are too frequently treated: at least they will ensure to themselves the consciousness of not deserving it.

But how in the life and conversation of one and the same person can we have an example appropriated to the peculiar circumstances of the rich likewise, as well as of the poor? I answer, that our Savior, if I may be allowed the seeming paradox, was both rich and poor. by that miraculous power, with which he was endued “without measure,” he was richer even with respect to worldly accommodations, pleasures and delights,

than the wealthiest of mankind, and had them more absolutely at his command, than the most potent monarch of the world. in the use therefore, that he made of this miraculous power, which was in fact to him riches, as well as power, he is, with the same strictness and propriety of speaking, an example to the rich and great, as in those other circumstances already insisted upon he is to the poor. such, as was his use of this miraculous gift, such exactly is to be our use of riches, as well as of worldly power, influence and authority of whatever kind. now in the enjoyment of this most extraordinary power he was free from all ostentation, pride and vanity; from all affectation of splendor, pomp and parade. he, that could by his prayer to the Almighty have obtained "more than twelve legions of angels" for his rescue out of the hands of his enemies, might, no doubt, if he had pleased, have been attended, in all his journeyings, with a most splendid retinue of these heavenly spirits, that should, wherever he came, have excited the astonishment of the gazing multitude. but every thing of this kind he declined, in order to shew the vanity of affecting worldly pomp, even in those, who have it most in their power to be surrounded with it. the nearer they approach to the perfection of the redeemer's moral character, the less account will they make of this external shew, the glittering phantom only of a day. so far was he from discovering any fondness for it in
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the use of that miraculous power we have been speaking of, that it was apparently with the greatest humilitie and condescension, simplicitie and modestie, affabilitie and courteousness, that he both possessed and exercised it. never did he exert it to any injurious and oppressive purposes, but always in acts of justice, benevolence and compassion; not making his power or influence the instrument of increasing the miseries of mankind, but applying it solely to the mitigation and relief of them. neither was he parsimonious or niggardly in the distribution of his miraculous riches, but “went about doing good, healing all manner of diseases,” and extending his favors to all, without respect of persons, who stood in need of them. nor, on the other hand, in dispensing the blessings, which so extraordinarie a power enabled him to bestow, was he needlessly profuse. thus, for example, in the instance of the fish, that was miraculously caught by St. Peter; it had money in it’s mouth, but yet no more, than was absolutely necessary for discharging the demanded tribute. so likewise, when he had in a manner so miraculous and amazing fed some thousands with a few loaves and fishes only, he orders, “the fragments to be gathered up, that nothing might be lost.” there is no doubt, but that in the same miraculous manner he could have gone on to provide for himself and his disciples. but this was done, that he might shew an example of frugalitie even in the greatest affluence.

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and this leads us to another remarkable circumstance, in relation to the use he made of this miraculous power. and that is, that it was never employed by him to serve the purposes of luxurie and intemperance. he, that by the instantaneous exercise of such a power could feed so many thousands at once, and bring such an amazing draught of fishes to the disciple's net, could, no doubt, whenever he pleased, have spread a most plentiful and magnificent table both for himself and them. but not a single instance do we meet with of this kind. nay, very rarely did he exert it so much as for his own ease and almost necessarie accommodation, or that of his constant attendants and companions, but voluntarily submitted to all the same hardships and fatigues, labors and inconveniencies, that in that condition of life, in which he appeared, he must, had he been endued with no such power, have unavoidably undergone. but by using it in that generous, disinterested, self-denying manner he ever did, he has taught the rich and the great of this world, who have no more natural wants, than the poorest and the meanest, that their power and affluence has been put into their hands by the disposal of the sovereign providence; not so much for their own use and accommodation, as to be exercised and distributed for the benefit and good of others. the possession of this extraordinarie power, together with the great acceptance he met with among numbers of the jewish people, as well as that

that absolutely uninterrupted state of health, which he enjoyed, may be considered as the prosperous scenes of his life. but from the immediately preceding remarks, as well as from some reflexions upon this subject more remotely prior, it appears, that, if the example of Christ be indeed the rule and criterion of moral conduct to mankind, we cannot pass through such scenes with any propriety of character, unless it be with humility, with charity, and with the most devout and grateful sentiments towards our heavenly father, that most gracious sovereign being from whom all our blessings flow. to the afflicted and distressed likewise we have already seen, what is the language, what the voice of his example. what; but patience and resignation, composure and fortitude of spirit, invincible alacrity and steadiness of mind, in fulfilling the duties of life, whatever may be the occurrences of it; and all this founded upon a firm and pious persuasion of the perfection of divine providence, of the benignity, and the wisdom of all its measures? we are likewise in other parts of the new testament, though not in the history itself of our Savior's life informed, that he "learned obedience by the things, which he suffered;" and that by them "he was made perfect." and in this particular we have pointed out to us that moral improvement, that is to be made of our calamities and afflictions by the refinement of our souls from sensual and worldly passions, the elevation
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BOOK II. of our minds towards divine and heavenly things, and the fixing our affections more firmly and intirely upon the unfading and durable pleasures of virtue and religion. thus accurately has our Savior's example been adapted to the several conditions of mankind relative to worldly blessings and enjoyments.

The same thing is observable with reference to the several distinct relations and social connexions, that are mutually subsisting between man and man. how clearly are the duties belonging to these several relations pointed out to us and delineated in the general tenor of his example? the greatest part of our blessed Savior's life on earth was passed in privacy and retirement. and by this means some very considerable ends even with respect to his public ministrie were answered. in this scene of life he had the opportunitie of establishing that unexceptionable and universal character for knowlege and wisdom, for pietie and goodness, which would give dignitie and force to what he was afterwards to deliver in public, as the prophet of the most high. in consequence of this unexceptionable character and great reputation, which he acquired in private life, "growing, as we are told, in wisdom and in favor, both with God and man," his doctrine would with much greater attention be listened to by those, to whom it was immediately and in person addressed. and this reception of it among them has not a little contributed to strengthen the evidences

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evidences of his mission in general. all the great CHAP. III.
ends and purposes it was originally designed to promote were effectually answered by the short time, that was taken up in the execution of it. and its duration could not have been extended farther without diminishing from the dignitie and lustre of it. but there was a still farther advantage arising from his privacie and retirement, here more peculiarly to be taken notice of; and that is, that in consequence of it many of the duties of private life have in his character been exemplified for our instruction. when our blessed Savior was but a child, he conversed among the "doctors," that is the teachers of religion, in the temple, propounding to them questions, and giving diligent attention to their answers. this shews us how early the cultivation of the mind should be begun, and how careful parents should be to promote it by embracing in the education of their children this earliest season for it, which, when once passed over, unimproved to purposes of this kind, they are seldom thought of in any future part of life. in this his retired station likewise we are expressly told, that "he was *subject* to his parents," shewing them all possible respect and reverence, and in the whole of his behavior expressing towards them the utmost dutie and obedience. and of his tender filial affection we have a most remarkable instance in what passed upon the cross. in the midst of all his agonies there, he distinctly and pathetically re-

commended his mother to the care and friendship of his beloved disciple St. John. and by this he undoubtedly intended to express his gratitude for that just affection and tenderness, with which she had sustained the character of a parent. and by thus inculcating in one of the most interesting scenes of his life the dutie of gratitude to parents, he has of course enforced it as owing to all benefactors in general, and in proportion to the favors we have received from them. by his behavior likewise to his parents upon another occasion he has pointed out to us, in the exactest manner, the limits of parental authoritie and of filial submission. "wist ye not," he says, when they were expostulating with him, about his being, without their knowlege of it, in the temple among the doctors; "wist ye not," knew ye not, that I was "about my father's," my heavenly father's, "business," and employed in acts of pietie and obedience to him? in matters of plain and acknowledged dutie, where conscience, integritie, and the most deliberate conviction of our own minds are immediately concerned, parental authoritie, should it ever injoin the contrarie, is of course superseded by the superior, the sovereign authoritie of heaven. and the same, according to the tenor of this example, must hold equally true, with respect to the influence, that any of the other usual relations and ordinarie connexions of human life ought to have upon our actions. no relative ties or obligations,
love

love or affection whatsoever must ever be suffered to come in competition with, at least not to preponderate against, that reverence, love and obedience, which upon such obvious and undeniable principles of nature and of reason must needs be in the first place due to the great sovereign and father of all. "if thy brother," as it is expressed in the law of Moses with respect to the case of idolatrie in particular, "if thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, who is as thine own soul, would intice thee in secret" to the violation of any divine law, "thou shalt not hearken or consent unto him." our Savior's disciples we may look upon as his familie. and by his behavior in it he has given us the best and most salutarie instructions with respect to the several duties appertaining to this domestic state. he did not indiscriminately gratifie their passions and humors, but consulted always their substantial good, how much soever he might know them to be in their own real inclinations averse to it. he did not condescend to their failings so as to indulge, much less to encorage them. but by his affabilitie, courteousness and willingness to oblige them in whatever was just and reasonable, he took the most effectual method of rectifying what might be amiss either in their sentiments or behavior. when he first formed them into a familie their hearts were much set upon worldly splendor and magnificence.

but did he encourage them in such a taste? no. on the contrarie he took the utmost pains to lower their ideas of worldly happiness and earthly splendor, and to make them sensible of what high, essential moment it was both to their innocence and their comfort, that they should learn to estimate both men and things, not by vulgar opinion or popular fashion, but according to the real standard itself of truth and nature. he taught them abstinence and self-denial in sensitive indulgences, and that the true happiness of men did not consist in the possessions or the honors of this world. and therefore in the whole of his conversation with them his main scope was to cultivate their mind, their reason and their better powers, and to train them up to sentiments of sinceritie, humilitie and virtuous fortitude. and to convince them, that these were indeed the most important concerns he took all possible care by his example, as well as by his instructions, to give them just notions of God, and of the adoration and homage that is due to him, and which is by solemn acts of prayer and praise, both in private, in the assemblies of public worship, and in the exercise of familie devotion to be presented before him. to all princes, kings and magistrates, the true and perfect, the just and accurate model of government has been exhibited in the use, that, as we have seen, he made of his miraculous power; a power far exceeding that of monarchie itself. for what prince could ever feed
thousands

thousands of his subjects with a morsel or two of bread, recruit his armies by calling back the slain to life, or be furnished with legions of angels to fight his battles? in the use then, I say, which he made of this stupendous power, he has taught all christian kings and princes, that they are not to be tyrants, not to employ their power and force in oppressing, enslaving, tormenting and murdering mankind, but in acts of justice, mercie, clemencie and benevolence. subjects likewise by working a miracle to pay tribute, as well as by the answer, which he gave unto certain, who inquired of him, whether they should pay it or not, which was no other than this; “render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” he has taught, that they are to be concurring with the sovereign in promoting the common welfare, chearfully to contribute to the expences of government, and everie one to exert himself to the utmost of his power in maintaining the rights and honors of the state. and where must the ministers of the everlasting gospel have recourse, in order to learn the nature of their office, and of the duties, to which it obliges them, if not to the example of him, who was “the author and finisher of the faith” we preach? where can they better learn that fidelitie, that corage and magnanimitie, that simplicitie of temper, that generous concern for the welfare of immortal souls, that unwearied ardor in promoting it, which ought to be the

the animating principles of all their conduct, if not by "fitting at the feet" and contemplating the character of their divine master? by these general hints, which might have been much more largely illustrated, had the proportionable limits of a separate chapter admitted of it, it will, I hope, appear, that the example of our blessed Savior is one admirably adapted to every condition and circumstance of human life.

A third thing, which we mentioned as necessary, in order to constitute the perfection of any moral character, was, that it be of the same uniform and invariable tenor throughout. this was an observation, which it seemed proper distinctly to specify. but there cannot, I presume, be any occasion for a more particular enlargement upon it here, as from the whole of what has hitherto been insisted upon, it must so fully appear to be an observation exactly verified in that of our redeemer. we would therefore now go on, in the

Second place, to point out the many great and singular advantages, which arise from the exhibition of such an example, and the indispensable obligation which as christians we lie under to the imitation of it. what clear and copious instruction it affords us, under all the special sanctions of a miraculous revelation, has been already shewn in illustrating the example itself. but let it be observed farther, in

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The first place, that our Savior's example was of the greatest importance towards establishing the credibilitie of his doctrine. the least blemish in his moral character would have given occasion for cavilling, of which his enemies undoubtedly would have made the most. and on the other hand, the remarkable innocence, excellencie and integritie of his life greatly increase the evidence of those truths, which he delivered. we believe men universally in what they affirm, according to the opinion we entertain of their general character. upon the testimonie of those, whom we look upon to be men of clear and unexceptionable integritie, upon such testimonie solemnly given we often believe to be true, even without their working any miracle at all, what otherwise we should perhaps have looked upon to be impossible. why then should we not put the like confidence in our blessed Savior, who could challenge surrounding enemies "to convince him of sin?" and this evidence rises still higher, when we consider the character of the twelve apostles, all joining with him in asserting the same thing, and without so much as a possibilitie in the case of any worldly interest to be answered by it. let us only select twelve or thirteen out of our own acquaintance, whose probitie and integritie, whose fair and honorable character we had no reason in any other instance to question, and ask ourselves, whether we can even think it possible, that they should on one particular occasion conspire together
in

BOOK II.

in attempting to make us believe what they all knew to be false ; especially if in such particular instance there was no appearance of any thing that could be supposed to bias their integritie.

But, secondly, such a finished example of all pietie and moral virtue, as that, which we have in the life of our blessed Savior, does in the strongest manner enforce everie moral precept he delivered. and it is an enforcement of moralitie peculiar to the gospel ; such as no lessons of virtue had ever before been attended with. how far that objection against the validitie of moral instructions, which is founded upon the imperfect character of those who deliver them, ought in reason to be admitted, is a question not here to be discussed. in fact it appears to have a very considerable influence towards encouraging men in a disregard to such instructions. it must therefore be one eminent advantage attending the moral precepts of the gospel, that there is not so much as a pretence for it. they were inculcated by one, who was himself an absolutely exact and punctual observer of them ; and to whom there was never so much as the slightest occasion given for applying that exhortation, the force of which must, alas, in some cases be so severely felted ; “ thou, that teachest another, teachest “ thou not thyself ? ” but,

Thirdly, the example of our blessed Savior is admirably well-adapted to affect our minds with a sense of the excellencie and loveliness of virtue.

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it was, I think, a saying of some one among the ancients, that, if virtue could but appear in human shape, all men would fall in love with it. now that, which was only their imagination, or at most their wish, is our actual privilege. virtue herself did indeed appear in human shape, when the Son of God “took upon him the form of a servant.” and under the same engaging and attractive idea she still presents herself to us, who have the records containing all the glorious peculiarities of his gospel in our hands. and, as there is no motive whatsoever to the practice of virtue of a more generous or of a more forcible and persuasive nature, than the innate beautie and loveliness of virtue itself, when once it comes to be by the ingenuous and attentive mind discerned, so neither is there any way, in which we can be so sensibly convinced of it, as by contemplating seriously and accurately the example of the Son of God, “of the word made flesh and dwelling among us.” but,

Fourthly, another advantage attending the exhibition of our blessed Savior’s example to mankind consists in it’s happie tendencie to give us the justest ideas of the sublimitie and continually progressive nature of virtue. it is the example of one vastly superior in dignitie and rank of moral nature to ourselves. and in this consists a principal part of it’s excellence. and very observable it is, that, notwithstanding this superioritie of nature, the imitation of his example is inculcated upon us,

as the matter of our christian dutie, without the least limitation or restriction whatsoever on account of it. without any exception, or allowance for this difference to be made, our general obligation, as christians, is, that *the same* mind be in us, which was “also in Christ Jesus; and that we walk, “even as he walked.” the very lowest sense of which precepts can be no other than this, that it is an example, which all are bound as nearly as possible to imitate. and as every one, how eminent soever may be his present attainments, must yet be conscious to himself, that he has it in his power to make some yet nearer approaches to it in the puritie and perfection of his moral temper, it is an example recommended to our imitation on purpose to inculcate upon us this very sentiment, that, in order to manifest the sinceritie of our virtue, we are to be incessantly laboring after still more eminent attainments in it. but should any one after all be inclined to question the propriety of recommending the example of one so far superior in original rank and dignitie of nature to the imitation of mankind, let us consider where an objection of this nature would terminate, and that, if admitted, it must needs lie infinitely stronger against having that of the supreme Deitie himself, the “God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” set before us in the same light. and yet it is the express doctrine of scripture, and has ever been that of true and genuin philosophie, “that we should
“ be

“ be perfect, as our father, who is in heaven, is CHAP. III.
“ perfect.”

In the last place, our Savior's example is peculiarly adapted to encourage and animate the professors of his religion in the practice of virtue, as being the example of their condescending friend and most compassionate redeemer. had the very same virtues been exhibited to our view in the character of some great illustrious being, that had been the Savior of some other order of intelligent natures, but had conferred no immediate favors upon ourselves, everie one must have perceived, that it could have been by no means so well-calculated for subserving the purposes of moral improvement among mankind. but with respect to the great christian model gratitude conspires with admiration and esteem to enforce our compliance with it. did not he, in whom we profess “ to abide,” take upon him our nature and become an inhabitant of this sinful world for our sakes? did he not in our behalf expose himself to all manner of injuries and affronts? did he not, “ that he might bring us to “ God,” expire upon the cross of agonie and shame? and must not all these considerations wonderfully endear his example to us, and almost irresistibly excite to an imitation of it? this sentiment, as well as some others, we have insisted on relative to the present topic, I find by Dr. Sibbs, in his *Soul's Conflict*, so aptly expressed, that I cannot but here adduce the passage at large, as it is occurring,

p. 177---79. "the more," he says, "we set
 " before the soule, that quiet estate in heaven,
 " which the soules of perfect men now enjoy, and
 " itself ere long shall enjoy there, the more it will
 " be in love with, and indeavour to attain unto it.
 " and because the soule never worketh better, than
 " when it is raised up by some strong and sweet
 " affection, let us look upon our nature, as it is in
 " Christ, in whom it is pure, sweet, calme, meeke,
 " every way lovely. this sight is a *changing* sight,
 " love is an affection of imitation, we affect a
 " likeness to him we love. let us *learne of Christ*
 " to be humble and meeke, and then *we shall find*
 " *rest to our soules*. the setting of an excellent
 " *idea* and *platforme* before us, will raise and draw
 " up our soules higher and make us *sensible* of the
 " least movings of spirit, that shall be contrarie to
 " that the attainment whereof we have in our de-
 " sires. he will hardly attaine to mean things, that
 " sets not before him higher perfection. naturally
 " we love to see symetry and proportion even in a
 " dead picture, and are much taken with some
 " curious peece. ; but why should we not rather
 " labor to keep the affections of the soule in due
 " proportion? seeing a meek and well ordered
 " soule is not only *lovely* in the sight of men and
 " angels, but is *much set by*, by the great God him-
 " self. but now the greatest care of those, who
 " set highest price upon themselves is, how to com-
 " pose their outward carriage in some graceful
 " manner

“ manner, never studying how to compose their
“ spirits, and rather how to *cover* the deformitie
“ of their passions than to *cure* them. whence
“ it is that the foulest inward vices are covered
“ with the fairest vizards, and to make this the
“ worse, all this is counted the best breeding.”
and to enforce all let me here add in a word, that
such is the natural power and energie of the great
christian exemplar for promoting the moral im-
provement of mankind, that nothing but either
total inattention or the grossest stupiditie, or else the
most lamentable depravitie of temper, can prevent
our feeling it's happie and reforming influences up-
on the mind. and which now of these pleas shall
we chuse to urge, when we come to appear before
that impartial, awful, heavenly tribunal, where the
deciding question will be, not, whether we have
believed the truth of christianitie, not whether we
have embraced this or that particular doctrine of it,
but whether the same “ spirit has been in us, that
“ was also in Christ Jesus the Lord ?”

CHAP. III.

C H A P. IV.

On the sufferings of Christ.

BOOK II.

IN treating upon the example of our blessed Savior, and illustrating the perfection of his moral character, which has been the subject of the preceding chapter, we have endeavored to give the just idea of that patience and magnanimity, that intire, composed and humble resignation to the will of God, with which he underwent the various sufferings both of his life and death. but these sufferings considered in themselves and as natural evils befalling him in the course and order of divine providence, are a distinct subject highly meriting our very particular attention. notwithstanding his perfect innocence, notwithstanding the amazing, incomprehensible and consummate dignity of his nature, he was, as described in prophesie, “ a man “ of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” and scarce is there any subject, that strikes the mind into a deeper seriousness and awe, or more disposes it for cool reflexion and sedate thought, scarce any thing, that lays a foundation for more useful and interesting meditations, than the contemplation of suffering

suffering and afflicted virtue, even though it be only in an ordinarie and common character. how singularly well-adapted then for answering these important purposes must be the employment of our thoughts upon the sufferings of that most illustrious being, who in so high, so peculiar and so eminent a sense, was both the Son of God and the Savior of man ! and as such was to be in fact the condition of this great and glorious person, when in the fullness of time, he should appear in the world and “ dwell amongst us,” there was an admirable propriety in it’s being so particularly insisted upon and expressly pointed out in prophesie. by this means the minds of those, among whom he was to appear, might have been gradually prepared for receiving him under the character of the true Messiah, even though this low and afflicted state might seem to be peculiarly inconsistent with it. how much is it to be wished, that, notwithstanding these precautions so kindly taken in the wisdom of divine providence, they had not on account of this very circumstance been “ offended in him !” but it is our design in treating upon this subject,

In the first place, somewhat more distinctly to specify the sufferings and sorrows of our blessed Redeemer, and then,

Secondly, to point out those many useful reflexions, which we have already hinted at as naturally arising from the contemplation of them.

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In the first place, let us somewhat more distinctly specify the sufferings and sorrows of the great redeemer. as has been intimated in the preceding chapter, there is one particular kind of sorrow, which often proves to us extremely burdensome and afflictive both for the present and in its train of consequences, from which, so far as appears in the gospel-writings, our blessed Savior was altogether free. and that is what arises from illness or disorder of body. we do not find throughout the whole course of his public ministration, that he was ever afflicted with any thing of this kind. and had any malady of this nature befallen him in the private and retired parts of his life, it would probably have been recorded, as other circumstances of it have been, and his example of patience and composure under bodily pains and illness proposed to our imitation. as our Savior had a body miraculously prepared for him, it was undoubtedly so formed, as not to subject him to any original or constitutional disorders. and his great abstinence, constant self-denial and strictest moderation with respect to the gratifications of sense, effectually prevented any incidental or acquired ones. and much more eligible it was undoubtedly, that we should be left without an example in his life and behavior of patience and submission to the will of God under this particular kind of affliction, than that his preaching to mankind the salutary truths of the gospel should have been enfeebled or interrupted by
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the pressure of them, or his miraculous operations intermitted. but with respect to other griefs and sorrows, difficulties and hardships, we find him exposed to the greatest varietie of them. constant traveling from day to day on foot, at the same time but scantily and meanly furnished with accommodations for refreshment, and after that, watching in the night-time, all which were frequently concurring circumstances in his life, could not but be in a very considerable degree burdensome to the animal nature. for, though our Savior was not subject to disorder of bodie, yet we find he was to weariness and fatigue. “ Jesus therefore being *wearied* with “ his journey,” says St. John, “ sat down on the “ well.” a circumstance this very strongly illustrating the subject we are upon, when we consider, it was in the neighbourhood of a citie, that amidst his fatigue and weariness he was thus poorly accommodated. innumerable were the revilings and calumnies, that were thrown out against him, and the snares that were laid for him, and indefatigable the opposition, that was made to his generous designs and benevolent labors by the malicious and hypocritical scribes and pharisees. nor was their malice confined to these particulars alone. they proceeded in their conduct towards him, as our Savior himself had foretold, that they would, to everie kind of ill-usage, and to bring upon him everie sorrow, that it was in their power to inflict. “ from that time forth,” as speaks the sacred historian,

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rian, "Jesus began to shew unto his disciples, how
 " that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many
 " things of the elders and chief priests and scribes,
 " and be killed, and be raised again the third day."
 accordingly being betrayed by Judas, one of his
 own disciples, to the chief-priests his bitterest ene-
 mies, he was by them carried before Pilate the
 Roman governor; by whom he was scourged, and
 delivered to the Jews to be crucified. " and the
 " soldiers of the governor took Jesus, and gather-
 " ed unto him the whole band" of soldiers;
 " and they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet
 " robe; and when they had platted a crown of
 " thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in
 " his right hand. and after they had *mocked* him
 " they took the robe off him, and put his own
 " raiment on him, and led him away to be cru-
 " cified." what base, enormous indignities were
 these! yet thus was the "Lord of life" insulted.
 " *crucis supplicio deformata majestas*," as we may
 with astonishment cry out so far as relates to the
 indignitie offered and external injurie. though as
 to the real greatness and excellencie of his cha-
 racter, the historian's negative in the case of his
 roman hero is here surely to be applied; *nec illo*
voluntario ad hostes suos reditu, nec ultimo, sine
carceris, sine crucis supplicio deformata majestas;
imo his omnibus admirabilior. Flor. lib. ii. c. ii.
 very justly is it observed likewise by Mr. Baxter,
 that "his suffering as a reputed malefactor upon
 " the

“ the cross, was a principal part of the merit of CHAP. IV.
“ his patience. for manie a man can bear the
“ *corporal pain*, who cannot so far denie his honor,
“ as to bear the imputation of a *crime*.” See his
Reasons of the Christian Religion, Part II. c. x.
p. 403. “ for the innocent Son of God, that was
“ never,” as he goes on, “ convict of sin, to
“ suffer under the name of a *blasphemer* and a
“ *traitor*, was greater condescension, than to have
“ suffered under the name of an innocent person.”
greater indeed, inexpressibly *greater*. and yet was
the indignitie, and consequently the condescension
in submitting to it, heightened, by some farther
circumstances attending this stupendous scene.
for when they had brought him to the place of
crucifixion and fastened him to the ignominious
cross, and that between two malefactors, who were
at the same time to suffer the sentence of the law
by them justly incured, “ they gave him,” insult-
ing him even in death, and triumphing over him in
his expiring pains, “ vinegar to drink mingled with
“ gall; which, when he had tasted, he would not
“ drink.” after which, and in the midst of all
these agonies, “ they pierced his side, so that there
“ came out water,” as well as “ blood,” which
was a certain indication of their having pierced him
to the heart. “ was he not” too, as Mr. Hervey
upon this subject has very pertinently hinted in his
Theron and Aspasio, Vol. I. p. 84. put to death
“ at one of their grand festivals, and in the sight
G g 2 “ of

“ of the whole assembled nation ?” and from the account, that is given us of our Savior’s previous agonie in the garden, the cause and occasion of which in the moral view of it has been already considered, an agonie, in which he even “ sweat great drops of blood,” it must appear to have been inexpressibly intense. this is a brief and summarie account of the sufferings of our redeemer. should any one be inclined to think, after such an account given of them, that they did not in themselves considered exceed those, which many others have endured, for the sake of truth and virtue ; I would beg leave to suggest the following considerations upon that head. First, supposing the sufferings of our Savior, not to have exceeded, in the degree of them, those, which have been endured by many of the human race both before and since his appearance in the world, yet even such sufferings, when compared with the super-eminent and inexpressible dignitie of his original character, may justly, nay necessarily must, in that light be considered as, strictly speaking, unparalleled. Secondly, as it appears from what has been already said, that our Savior’s bodie was of so extraordinarie a temperature, and so remarkably distinguished from those we animate, as not to subject him to diseases of any kind, so much as for the shortest period throughout the whole course of his life, there is great reason to believe, that all his bodily sensations, and consequently those of pain, were far more lively

ly and acute than ours. And then, farther yet, it CHAP. IV.
is a consideration of very great moment in the present case, that our Savior's sufferings chiefly arose from the ill-usage and iniquitous conduct of others; from their insolence and ingratitude, their rage and malice, their spite and envie, shewn to one who was continually laboring for their good, and came into the world on purpose to promote their salvation, and from the rude, incessant opposition, which they made to these, his generous and god-like designs. now such kind of treatment is perhaps the greatest of all human afflictions. to be trampled upon, insulted, vilified, derided, defamed and evil spoken of; to be opposed in everie good and laudable design, carried on even for the welfare of those, from whom the opposition comes, to have all possible pains taken to disturb our spirits and to disquiet our lives, to be thus treated, I say, by those, who are under the highest possible obligations to us, it is worse than pain; it is worse than povertie; it is worse than death itself. and the more of generositie and virtue there is in the minds of those, who meet with such treatment, the greater must be their grief and sorrow on account of it; since in this case the very affliction itself consists not so much in the personal injurie done to themselves, as in the deep, astonishing sense, they must have of the malice and monstrous ingratitude, which such treatment cannot but impie in those, from whom they meet with it. how
inexpressibly

On the sufferings of Christ.

inexpressibly great then must have been the sorrows of the man Christ Jesus! in consequence of the perfection of his own moral character he must have had the most lively and vigorous sense imaginable of the odiousness and foul deformities of vice. and yet to this very kind of treatment indicating the most malignant degree of it, was he exposed, not in this or that particular instance alone, but throughout the whole course of his life. I have said *inexpressibly* great. and this is indeed the very term, which our Savior's conduct in this situation immediately suggests. "he was oppressed, he was afflicted; yet he *opened not* his mouth." he is brought, as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is "dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:" the malignant spirit of his persecutors, and the deep sense he had of it, was too great for words to express. to insult and to treat with scorn and derision even our enemy, our greatest enemy, has something in it, that is extremely base and degenerate, and is always looked upon as the mark of a deeply corrupted and wicked temper. how enormous then and beyond conception great must have been the wickedness of those, who, as did the scribes and pharisees in their conduct towards our blessed Savior, treat in the very same insolent and scornful manner their best and most faithful friend! this, this is malignity of spirit only to be equaled in those infernal regions, where all is spite and malice, envy and rage, impiety and absolute

absolute enmitie to whatever is good and sacred. upon these principles it should seem impossible to form any idea of the depth of our Savior's "sorrows," that shall be so much as tolerably just or accurate, without considering them, as chiefly arising from the insolence, ingratitude, malice and envie of those, upon whom he was daily conferring the greatest obligations. and this is what the prophet in speaking upon this subject seems to have pointed out as the principal source of them. "he was," says he, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." how direct the consequence; the observation immediately preceding being this: "he was despised and rejected of men;" "despised and rejected," and most ignominiously treated by those very men, in whose behalf he was daily exerting himself, for whose happiness he was continually laboring, and for whose sake he was born into the world!

Having thus endeavored to place in a proper point of view the sufferings of the redeemer, let us now procede to the consideration of those many useful sentiments and observations, that will naturally arise from the contemplation of them. and,

First, by these sufferings we are furnished with a solution, that is wholly peculiar to the gospel-system, of one of the principal difficulties, that has been ever urged in relation to the conduct of divine providence towards mankind. the question has again and again been asked, if there be indeed
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a divine and absolutely perfect, an infinitely benevolent and an unerring providence, that governs without controul in the world, and presides over all it's events, how comes it to pass, that even the best among mankind should be so often seen to struggle with adversities the most distressing and severe? but the suffering scene, through which our blessed Savior passed, during his abode upon earth, is an instance in the conduct and dispensations of this very providence itself most admirably adapted for removing such a difficultie, and for creating in our minds the most intire satisfaction and acquiescence upon this head. we have here an instance of a being eminent beyond all comprehension in the scale of intelligent natures, matchless and consummate in everie perfection of moral character, yet in the counsels of divine providence, appointed to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." and this, when seriously, and with a lively faith contemplated by the good and pious christian, what a powerful means must it be of reconciling him both to his own afflictions, and to those of any others among the good and virtuous, in whatever part or period of the world they may have lived? in how strong a light must it be seen in an instance like this, that such afflictions are not in the least degree inconsistent with the most transcending dignitie of nature, or with the highest share in the complacencie and love of the sovereign Deitie; and that consequently they cannot in reason

on amount to any sort of objection against the perfection or benevolence of that providence, which rules in nature. if in exact and perfect hamonie, with the most glorious attributes of divinitie, the pure and innocent, the lovely and most adorable Jesus might be “ a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” “ why should a living man,” like one of us, “ complain ; a man for the punishment of his sins ?” and here by the way we may see the inconclusiveness of an argument, that has been much insisted upon, as carrying in it an undeniable proof of the original corruption and depravitie of human nature. a doctrine, the belief of which, it is to be feared, has contributed not a little to our actual corruption, and to the present sad degeneracie of the christian world. it is urged, that, if men are not born in sin, but, on the contrary, in perfect innocence of nature ; how shall we be able to reconcile the sufferings, pains and death of infants, to the perfections of the sovereign creator. but, if this mode of argument be admitted, will it not prove too much ? will it not oblige us to conclude, that our blessed Savior himself was born in sin ? for “ he was a man of sorrows, “ and acquainted with grief.” but, as in this instance, it appears undeniably plain, that it may be fully consistent with the divine perfections, not only that a merely innocent being, but even a being in the highest degree virtuous, a being most eminently, and beyond what can be true of any other existing

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nature

nature whatsoever, the object of the divine approbation and complacencie, may stand exposed to a varietie of sufferings and sorrows, what difficultie can there be in admiting the same with respect to the infant-race of mankind, notwithstanding the perfect simplicitie and innocence of their natures?

Near a kin to such observations as these, is another reflexion naturally arising from the consideration of our Savior's sufferings and sorrows. in them we plainly see the follie and wickedness of deciding upon men's moral characters merely by the share, which they are seen to have in the afflictions and calamities of the world. either thro' a mistaken notion of happiness leading us to conclude, that it must needs consist in the abundance of external enjoyments and pleasures, or else thro' a censorious inclination, disposing us to take everie occasion for reproching and calumniating our neighbor, it has been a very general custom amongst mankind to look upon great sufferings and afflictions befalling any one of our fellow-creatures, as a mark of the divine displeasure against him on account of his sins. thus Job's friends doubled his calamities by assigning some latent wickedness as the occasion of them. "is not," say they, "thy wickedness great, and thy sin infinite, for thou
 " has taken a pledge from thy brother for nought,
 " and striped the naked of their cloathing: thou
 " hast not given water to the wearie to drink, and
 " thou hast withdrawn bread from the hungrie;
 " thou

“ thou hast sended widows away emptie, and the
“ arms of the fatherless have been broken. there-
“ fore snares are round about thee, and sudden
“ fear troubles thee.” thus too it appears from
the answer given to them by our blessed Savior, that
those, who “ told him of the Galileans, whose
“ blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices,”
imagined that he would immediately have con-
demned these persons on account of this dreadful
ruin, which had overtaken them, as having been
some of the worst among mankind. in like man-
ner, from nothing else but a viper’s fastening upon
St. Paul’s hand, those who observed it instantly
took occasion to say among themselves; “ no
“ doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he
“ has escaped the seas, yet vengeance,” divine ven-
geance, “ suffereth not to live.” nor are these
“ barbarians,” as they are called, not on account
of their manners, but their countrie, since from
this very narrative they appear to have been a peo-
ple hospitable and kind, the last, that have allowed
themselves in such a rash, uncharitable method of
commenting upon providence. but in the case of
our Lord Jesus Christ we have one instance at least
of a person, who was “ holie, harmless, undefiled,”
yet passing through a great varietie of afflictions
and sorrows. how much then may we be mis-
taken, when we take upon us to assign peculiar
vitioufness and depravitie in a man’s life and tem-

per, as the only reason to be supposed for the peculiar calamities he may undergo.

Thirdly, how willing should be they, who call themselves the disciples of Christ, to suffer, after his example, for the good of others? his example is by St. Paul expressly urged upon us in this light. “look not,” he says, “every man at his own things;” that is, not so, as to be intirely taken up with his own private concerns, and to be totally negligent and regardless of the common interest of his fellow-creatures; “but everie man also on the things of others. let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God---made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; and being made in fashion, as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” and most certain it is, that one great and principal design of our Savior’s living among men, and especially of his enduring, while on earth, such a varietie of griefs and sorrows, was, that he might inspire our hearts by his example with a generous ardor in the pursuit of virtue, and prompt us to aim at the most exalted improvements in moral goodness. that benevolence, which will induce a man to do good no farther than he can do it without interrupting his own ease, or sacrificing his private pleasure and convenience, is low indeed, and scarce deserves the
I name.

name. it seems to be but a remove or two from downright ill-nature; and is too indolent and remiss a principle, or else too much confined and limited by selfish and corrupted views, either to be of any considerable service in the world, or to contribute in any tolerable degree to the merit of our own characters. that more exalted spirit then of generositie and love, which we cannot but admire, as exemplified by the conduct and in the sufferings of the great redeemer, let us nobly dare to imitate. how weak must be our relish for the general good and the happiness of our fellow-creatures, if we are not willing to take some pains and undergo some difficulties in promoting it! God himself in the daily operations of his providence is giving us an example of unwearied and ever-active, and in the character of the Son of God we have a most striking, and never-enough-to-be-admired instance of humble, patient, condescending and suffering goodness. let us therefore be "holie, as he who has called us, is holie; perfect, as our father, who is in heaven, is perfect."

Fourthly, these virtues of our blessed Savior were particularly illustrated by his suffering, in order to erect the gospel-dispensation in the world. and according to this distinct and special idea, which we are to entertain, as to the design of them, there is undoubtedly a farther moral use, to which the consideration of them is to be applied. and in imitation of this great example we ourselves are

On the sufferings of Christ.

are to decline no sufferings, which for the maintenance and defence of the gospel-faith we may be called upon to endure, but even willingly and with the full consent of our minds to be submitting to them. and on this distinct and special account the imitation of it has been expressly urged upon us in the sacred, evangelic page itself. "this is thank-worthie," says St. Peter, "if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully; for hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we might follow his steps." and in this sense it is, that we are to understand the maxim of St. John, when he says, "that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." that is, we ought rather to die in defence of the true religion, with which the happiness of mankind is so closely and intimately connected, than desert the profession of it. thanks be to God we are not in these days exposed to such extremities. yet "all, who will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution" of one kind or of another. nor is there any thing more probable, than that by adhering firmly and zealously to what we apprehend to be the simplicitie of the gospel in these licentious times, when zeal for religion is by many thought to be little better than madness, we may bring upon ourselves many worldly inconveniencies and disadvantages. but let us bear them with composure, meekness and constancie, and, while primitive

primitive christians could die for the truth, let it not be the dishonor of these later times, that we suffer ourselves, either to be laughed, or to be frowned out of our profession of it.

Again, as our blessed Savior suffered in defence of religious truth, so likewise with a direct and ultimate view of promoting amongst mankind the practice of moral virtue. and can we possibly conceive of any thing, that could have given us an higher idea of it's importance, than the sufferings, the griefs, the sorrows, the tears, the agonies of so exalted and illustrious a person for the sake of it? "he died for all, that they, who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him," in conformitie to his temper and spirit, to his authoritie and laws, to the genius and design of his religion, to the grand and ultimate views of his endearing love; "who died for them, and rose again." "he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all *iniquitie*, and purchase us unto himself a peculiar people, that should be zealous of *good works*." and "his own self bare our sins in his own bodie on the tree, that we being dead to sin, might live to *righteousness*, and be healed by his stripes." these and many others, that might have been produced, are declarations as clear and explicit as possible, assuring us, that the end of Christ's sufferings was the purification of our hearts, the renovation of our tempers, and the promoting moral virtue and righteousness

teousness amongst mankind. and if so, of what high and eminent importance to himself must be every man's own personal integrity and virtue? how great the regard, which we ought to have to it, both in our practice, and in the expectations, which we indulge in relation to the divine favor and the heavenly happiness? or is it indeed ever to be believed, that the Son of God, should, according to the good pleasure and by the appointment of the sovereign Deity, have suffered upon the cross of ignominy and pain, in order to induce mankind to the practice of that virtue, which, when practised, will stand us in no stead and be of no account at all in relation to our final happiness? would not this be in effect to suppose, that he died comparatively for a very trifling purpose? be it therefore our care to abound in all the "fruits of "righteousness" and holiness, ever remembering these solemn declarations of scripture, that those, "who do the commandments of God, have a right "to the tree of life;" "that he who does righteousness, is righteous," that is, he is so esteemed in the sight of God, "even as he," that is Christ, "is righteous," that "herein *we*" are to "labor, that, whether present or absent, we may "be accepted of the Lord;" in short, that "every one" is to be judged before the impartial tribunal of heaven, "according to what he has, "and not according to what he *has not*."

In

In the last place, how much do the sufferings of our blessed Savior ennoble and endear his character, and what forcible motives must be from hence arising to the practice of all virtue and righteousness! considering the ineffable dignitie and glorie, which he possessed “in the bosom of the “father, before the world was,” the most splendid and affluent circumstances here on earth would have been to him meanness and povertie. his condescension in that light would have been awful and amazing, and our obligations to him vast and unutterably great. but how much greater still must they appear upon our recollecting, that he stooped from the height of heaven to the meanest condition and lowest circumstances of this mortal state! this is virtue, that we can scarce conceive of, but yet it is real. neither is it merely an object for imagination to exercise it’s strength, and trie it’s flights upon; but to be admired, delighted in, and with pleasure and joy contemplated by creatures of our inward make and moral constitution. but, when we consider still farther, that it was for us men and our salvation, that this wonderful and condescending scheme was undertaken and executed, what words can express or tongue declare the debt of love and gratitude we owe him! “when we “were yet without strength,” when the noble powers and faculties of the human mind had been enfeebled and debased, weakened and most dreadfully impaired by the general prevalence of vice

I i and

and wickedness among mankind, Christ “died for
 “the ungodly.” he died; not to save them in
 their ungodliness and in their sins. this would have
 been, were it possible to have been at all, a most
 pernicious and destructive scheme, countenancing
 in the highest imaginable degree the practice of uni-
 versal iniquitie, and proclaiming, as it were,
 throughout the whole rational and moral universe
 an indulgence for it. but he died, and glorious
 was the design, to “save us from sin,” and from
 all that wretchedness and woe, which, according to
 the wise constitution of things, that has been form-
 ed and is still maintained by the sovereign ruler of
 the world, is the unavoidable result of it. he died,
 to restore mankind to their original and genuin
 character by teaching them to cultivate the dis-
 positions of love to God and of universal benevo-
 lence towards one another. he died, in order to
 introduce us into a state of rational, moral, sublime
 and god-like happiness. a happiness to take place in
 some measure here, and to advance by degrees, during
 our present pilgrimage on earth, till the perfect joy
 commences in heaven; that world of life and im-
 mortalitie, the prospect of which has been so clear-
 ly set before us in his most holie gospel. this is the
 happiness, in which that we might be instated, he
 became “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with
 “grief.” how then can we refrain from joining
 the choir of holie angels in saying, “worthie is
 “the

“ the Lamb, that was slain, to receive riches and
“ glorie and honor and dominion ?”

CHAP. IV.

Thus then have we considered the sufferings and death of Christ, as natural evils befalling him in the course and order of divine providence. we have likewise endeavored in the preceding chapter to illustrate that example of patience, pietie, fortitude and resignation, which they were the occasion of his exhibiting to the world. but with respect to the death of Christ in particular, it is constantly represented in the scriptures of the new testament as an atoning or expiatorie sacrifice for the sins of mankind. that it truly was so our Savior himself and his holie apostles have with one unanimous voice affirmed. but the consideration of it in this highest and most important point of view, will be the business of the following chapter.

C H A P. V.

On the atonement of Christ.

BOOK II.

THAT the death of Christ was a true and proper atonement for the sins of mankind is asserted in almost innumerable passages of the new testament. it is asserted too in those plain, explicit terms, that cannot by all the power, or by any of the arts of criticism, be interpreted into a different meaning. I think it therefore altogether needless to employ any part of this chapter, in proving that this is indeed a doctrine of the scriptures. I take it for granted, that it is so. and what I chiefly aim at is to vindicate the scriptures upon this head, by shewing, that, as it is undoubtedly a scriptural, so likewise a perfectly rational doctrine. and I would willingly flatter myself, that in our intended illustration of the subject it will be made to appear, that there is in the death of Christ considered in itself and in it's own immediate nature such an essential virtue, power and efficacie towards reconciling a sinful world to the offended Deitie, that, had the scriptures never represented it as a propitiatorie sacrifice, our own
just

just reasonings and reflexions upon it's genuin tendency and influence must necessarily have determined us to look upon it in that light. at the same time there is perhaps no principle to be named, that has been so much corrupted among the professors of the gospel, or so intirely perverted from those excellent purposes, which in it's original and just simplicitie it is so admirably adapted to answer. as too commonly represented and believed among us there is great reason to apprehend, that it rather tends to defeat the true design of christianitie, than to be in any sort conducing to it. and from hence the opposers of the christian religion in general have taken occasion to advance such objections against this particular doctrine of it, as are no other-ways to be answered, than by recuring with the greatest accuracie of thought in the representations we give of it, to the absolutely pure and unsophisticated sense of the evangelic page. on all these accounts, there is a kind of peculiar necessitie, when we treat upon this subject, of doing it with the greatest possible plainness and integritie; "not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but, as of sinceritie, as of God, in the sight of God." and that method of argument which appears to me best subservient to the purposes I have been hinting at, is as follows:

First, to state the notion or true idea of an atonement for sin.

Secondly,

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Secondly, to shew, that the death of Christ is strictly and literally, truly and properly such an atonement. and, when these particulars shall have been discussed, it will, we hope, appear in the

Third place, that it is in this view of it a most eminent and illustrious display of the divine perfections; a "declaration," as it is expressed by the apostle, of "the righteousness, the justice, the forbearance, the mercie, and the free grace" of the supreme Lord and governor of the moral universe. "being justified *freely*, by his *grace*, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to *declare* his righteousness for the remission of sins, that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his *righteousness*, that he might be just, and the justifier of him, who believeth in Jesus:" such is the language of the apostle. and one might almost believe, that he chose to express himself in this particular manner, knowing by the spirit of prophecy, that such accounts would in future ages be given of this doctrine of atonement or propitiation, as instead of *declaring*, either the righteousness of deity, or any one of the divine attributes besides, would darken and deface them all.

First, then, we are to state the notion or true idea of an atonement for sin. in the levitical law several things purely inanimate are said to make atonement. this is what will evidently be seen by those,

those, who will consult it. and from hence it undeniably follows, that a translation of guilt or the undergoing vicarious pains and sufferings are ideas no way necessarie, in order to complete the notion of a strict and proper atonement. even the slaying of those animals, that under the mosaic dispensation were more generally offered up in sacrifice for the remission either of ceremonial or political guilt contracted, might, in consequence of a divine appointment, be thoroughly effectual for this purpose, without any such substitution in the case. if they were such sacrifices, as God had appointed for the removal of such guilt contracted, and as the means of freeing the offender from all farther penaltie or liableness to punishment on the account of it, they could not but be of an atoning nature, whether we suppose them to have been vicarious or not. for that, according to the original meaning of this very word itself in our own language, and as it occurs in some of our ancient writers, before it came to be wholly appropriated to a theological sense, as well as of the original word so rendered in the new testament; that, I say, is a true and proper "atonement," which is a natural and well-adapted, and, if properly applied, will most certainly be an efficacious means, of procuring the pardon of any offence committed, and reconciling the transgressor to the being, that has been offended. atonement and reconciliation are words exactly synonymous in their meaning and signification. and accordingly

the very same word in the original language of the new testament is in our version alternately rendered by one or the other of these terms. so that the only idea or circumstance, that is essentially necessary to constitute a strict and proper atonement, is, that what we apprehend to be so, be an efficacious, and, in the nature of it, an every way sufficient means for procuring the pardon or remission of the sin or sins supposed to be atoned for. in whatever manner it produces this effect, whether by being a substitution in the room of the offender, or whether by being intrinsically meritorious and acceptable to the being offended, or by any influence that it has upon the mind of the offender, still if it be a competent and well-adapted means of effecting a reconciliation, and bringing the transgressor into a state of pardon and remission, it is, in the strictest sense, and most literal meaning of language, an atonement for the guilt contracted. Grotius therefore allows, that he and Socinus were agreed in looking upon the death of Christ as an "expiatorie sacrifice," and differed only in their manner of accounting for it's efficacy as such. *Constat nobis & Socino de voce; Christi mortem fuisse sacrificium expiatorium, sive victimam pro peccato, id ipsum clarè testante divinâ ad Hebræos epistolâ, imprimis, cap. 9. Sed de ejus vocis vi propriâ aliter Socinus, aliter sentit Christi Ecclesia. Vid. Grot. de Satisfaction. Christi. c. x. p. 182. and indeed what says Socinus himself? speaking of this very epistle*

epistle to the Hebrews, Tractat. de Justificat. CHAP. V.
Synops. I. p. 8. his words are ; ubi de Christi *oblacione expiatoria*, “ex professio” & copiose agitur. and it is a kind of language that is altogether familiar to him. the jewish sacrifices indeed, which we have just now been speaking of, were not in the original appointment of them, though afterwards, as appears from the prophetic writings, grossly perverted by the jews into a meaning of that kind ; but they were not, I say, in the original appointment or institution of them intended for the removal of moral guilt, but only of that, which was ceremonial or political. the propitiation made by the blood of Christ, on the contrarie, was intended for the removal of moral guilt and of that alone, and for reinstating in the divine favor, and procuring pardon and mercie for, those, who had contracted it. and in this very light it was, that the ancient heathens in general considered the sacrifices, which they offered to the Gods. they considered them as moral atonements, as proper and requisite applications for mercie to the throne of an offended Deitie, and as having in them the highest efficacie for averting his displeasure and expiating the guilt they had incurred by the violation of some sacred rite or moral tie. if therefore the death of Christ has in fact the same power, influence and efficacie with respect to moral guilt, as the jewish sacrifices had towards obtaining the remission of that, which was ceremonial or political, if it does

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in realitie answer all the same happie purposes, which the heathens, though falsely, supposed to be effected by their own oblations and sacrifices, when they considered them as atonements or expiations for moral crimes; what can be plainer, than that it must be strictly and literally, truly and properly, an atoning or expiatorie sacrifice for the iniquities of mankind? that indeed it is so, according to the idea, of a true and proper atonement, which we have now been insisting upon, is what we proposed, in the

Second place, to prove. and if upon due consideration it appear to be a most excellent and efficacious means of reconciling the sinful creatures of our human race to their offended maker, if in this one point everie single circumstance relating to it, be found invariably and uniformly to center, if moreover it was an *expedient* expressly appointed in the counsels of heaven for answering this very end; there cannot, I think, be a moment's room for doubting, whether or no, God has indeed "set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." now that this is no other than a just and natural representation will, I presume, appear to be fully demonstrated from the following considerations.

In the first place, the death of Christ was an event of absolute necessitie, in order to our being invested with the privileges of the gospel. to say only, upon this head, that it was in fact a confirmation

mation of the truth of christianitie in being such an undeniable proof of the veracitie and sinceritie of it's author, is falling prodigiously short of what it's real influence and importance in this respect amounts to. it was absolutely necessarie to the very being and subsistence of christianitie in the world : and without it all the saving benefits of the gospel had been lost for ever. so that the blood of Christ was, as we may justly say, that pretious cement, by which the whole system of evangelical truths and privileges have been formed into one compact and durable fabric of divine mercie and love ; and wanting which, it would have been only a fabric, most beautifully and exquisitely modeled indeed, and happily begun---but left at length in deplorable and everlasting ruin. from the cross, the cross of Christ it was, that the light of the gospel diffused itself throughout the world. and at that very instant, when nature's sun was darkened ; astonished, as it were, at the crucifixion of the " Lord " of life," then, then it was that the Son of righteousness arose, complete in his glorie, and with " healing under his wings." from that very blood, which was there shed, with the vain hope, on the part of his enemies, that it would prove the immediate and absolute destruction of christianitie, have we derived all it's animating consolations and everie privilege it affords us. this " glorious gospel," on account of it's wonderful power and mightie efficacie towards reforming and purifying

the heart of man, and impressing upon our souls that image of the divine nature, by which only we can be qualified for being the objects of divine forgiveness and complacencie, is called in scripture "the ministrie of reconciliation," and again "the word of reconciliation;" or as in both the passages referred to we might have read, "the ministrie, the word" of *atonement*: the original term being in both the very same with that, which elsewhere in the new testament is translated, *atonement*. if then the gospel, or system of evangelic truth may on this account be so justly styled the atoning gospel; with what exact, with what peculiar and most eminent propriety, in what a vastly more interesting and exalted sense must the death of that most holie, innocent, spotless Lamb of God, to which we are intirely and absolutely indebted for everie gospel-privilege, be called an atoning sacrifice? and with respect to all, who have really experienced the efficacie of christian truth in forming their own minds to the habits of virtue, in delivering their souls from the power and dominion of sin, and consequently from all it's fears and terrors, from all it's woes and miseries, how justly is it to be said, on this account and on the principles of the preceding argument, that the great Redeemer has "washed them from their sins in his blood," that "their robes have been made white in the blood of the Lamb, and that the blood of Christ has cleansed them from all sin?" since if this blood

blood had not been shed, they could never have heard the "glad tidings" of the gospel, and consequently have never felted its purifying influences or cleansing power. CHAP. V.

Secondly, another consideration of the highest moment and importance upon this subject, is, that the death of Christ was a clear, authentic, public, and most awful declaration of the divine displeasure against sin, and designed in the wisdom of divine providence to be an everlasting memorial of it. among the several other causes, that may be assigned for the licentiousness, presumption and insolence, with which such numbers of our corrupt and sinful race are daily violating the laws of the sovereign ruler, there is none, that can be thought to have a more diffusive or fatal influence of this kind, than the not sufficiently reflecting upon that divine displeasure, which is necessarily incurred by the practice of it. could they but once be persuaded to "set the Lord" habitually "before them," as that God, who, in consequence of the essential perfection of his own nature, must have an infinite abhorrence of all moral turpitude in his creatures, a concern for their own happiness at least, if not the gratitude and ingenuitie of their tempers towards their heavenly benefactor, could not fail of leading them into the most serious and useful reflexions upon the iniquitie of their ways; which might happily terminate in the amendment of them upon the worthiest motives. any "expedient"

“pedient” therefore fixed upon in the methods of divine providence, by which men may be made more feelingly and deeply sensible of this truth, must needs carry in it a most important and efficacious influence towards the reconciliation of a sinful world to the offended Lord and Governor of all intelligent and moral agents. and is it possible for us to conceive of any, that could have been more directly adapted to this end, than the sufferings and death of the Son of God upon the ignominious cross? what was it fastened him to that cross, but sin; that sin, from which by expiring on it he came to deliver us? what was it that pierced his side, that nailed his hands and his feet, that exposed him even in these his dying tortures to the scoffs of surrounding enemies, and of an ignorant rabble, but the iniquities of mankind? yes, “he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” and if so, what clearer or more striking demonstration could have been given us of the odious and deformed nature of sin, of its contrariety to the will of God, and, by necessary and immediate consequence, to the highest happiness of our own immortal beings? if it had not carried in it this infinite deformity, this immutable and eternal contrariety to the divine nature and perfections, if it had not been the necessary source of misery and wretchedness to man, would so great, so glorious a person, as the “only-begotten Son of God,” would he, who was the
“brightness

“ brightness of the supreme father’s glorie,” and CHAP. V.
in whom he was always “ well-pleased ;” would
this illustrious being have appeared among us, not
only in the “ form of a servant,” but even of a
condemned malefactor, in order to deliver us from
it’s bondage and dominion ? when this adorable
Son of God most high resigned upon the cross his
latest breath, what a voice, what an explicit, awful,
deciding voice did in that very breath go forth,
that has reached to the uttermost ends of the earth,
and is designed to reach to the latest generations of
mankind ; proclaiming the supreme, eternal ma-
jesty of heaven and earth to be a God, that
“ hateth iniquitie,” that “ will not be mocked,”
that is jealous of the rights and honors of his moral
government, that will not suffer them to be tram-
pled upon by any of his human creatures with im-
punitie, or receive them into favor, upon any sol-
licitations or intercession whatsoever, without a pe-
nitent and sincere renunciation, of those sins, by
which they may have violated and transgressed
them ? on this account then must the atoning vir-
tue of our Savior’s death and passion be prodigiously
increased. but such is the consummate wisdom,
such the richness of the divine grace in this won-
derful and amazing scene, displayed, that I have to
add, in the

Third place, that, as the death of Christ is a
most clear and striking declaration and memorial
of the deformitie and turpitude of sin, and of the
displeasure

displeasure of the great governor of the universe against it, so likewise is it an equally clear, an equally sensible and affecting demonstration of the divine placabilitie. and in this view of it likewise is it a most natural and efficacious means of promoting our reconciliation with God, and must therefore be looked upon, as being of a truly propitiatorie and expiating nature. for how can we be reconciled to God without repentance? or what encouragement can we have to repent, without being assured, that God is placable and forgiving? were he otherwise, inexorable and unrelenting, where could be our hope? or what profit be arising even from our deepest humiliations, or the bitterest sorrows of the returning sinner? if then the death of Christ be a most evident proof and demonstration of the divine forgiveness, it must on this farther account be an "expedient" most wisely and graciously calculated for averting the divine displeasure, and for rendering us the happie objects of divine everlasting love. and is it not so indeed? if God had not been "rich in mercie," if there had not been "plenteous redemption" for us sinful men, in the essential attributes, in the unchangeable propitiousness and clemencie of his own nature, would he have sent his only-begotten Son into the world; and that to undergo the deepest abasement, and even death itself in the most ignominious form, on purpose that we might be reconciled unto himself? would he have laid such a stupendous

pendous scheme as this, in order to make overtures of grace and salvation to his offending creature man, if he had not been a God ready to forgive, a God, who "delighteth in mercie?" and if these considerations presented to us after so lively and affecting a manner in the bleeding agonies of a dying Savior, in conjunction with those other so highly cogent and persuasive motives to a sincere repentance and unfeigned humiliation for our offences, which in his death are set before us, have indeed effectually influenced our hearts to that prevailing love of virtue and righteousness, in consequence of which we are happily become the objects of the divine forgiveness and approbation, with what strict propriety may we, with what adoring sentiments of gratitude ought we to say, "that we
"are reconciled unto God in the body of his flesh
"through death," and that "we have redemption
"through his blood even the forgiveness of our
"sins?" how naturally will such language flow from the lips of the devout and sincerely virtuous believer of the evangelic doctrine? and it is only such, that can use it in all the fulness of its meaning; as is sufficiently intimated in the accurate language of the apostle, when he says, "whom God
"has set forth to be a propitiation *through faith*
"in his blood." to all, who have received the knowledge of the gospel Christ is a propitiation "set
"forth," graciously "proposed" and offered, on the part of heaven, to their acceptance, to be made

their comfort and consolation, the joy and triumph of their souls, and to become fully efficacious for their reconciliation and eternal happiness. and a propitiation it is every way sufficient, if we are not wanting to ourselves in the due application of it to our own hearts and temper, for answering all these infinitely momentous purposes. nevertheless it is only "through faith in his blood;" such a lively faith in that gospel, which he sealed and ratified with his blood, in that wonderful grace and condescension, which he manifested in shedding it for our sakes, and in all those interesting truths and principles, which with such peculiar force and energy it is continually presenting to our view, that it can become a really effectual propitiation to each one in particular. and that for this plain and obvious reason, because it is only by the means or instrumentalitie of such a faith, that we can actually experience it's cleansing and purifying influences upon our hearts, or partake of it's atoning virtues. nor can this be any objection at all to the fulness and sufficiencie of it's propitiatorie power; since it would have been utterly inconsistent with the perfections of the Deitie, and totally repugnant to all the views of his moral government to have provided any atonement at all, that should have had virtue enough to save us, independently of our own internal character and disposition. it is therefore the peculiar excellencie of the christian propitiation, that it is in the very nature and design of it most directly

directly fitted to produce in the heart of man those very dispositions of mind, without which no atonement whatsoever can be available for our pardon.

“ let us then,” says a most respectable ancient, even the apostolic Clement himself, “ let us renounce our
“ vain and idle cares, and applie ourselves to the
“ grand and venerable maxims of our holie voca-
“ tion. let us contemplate with intense and fixed
“ eye, the blood of Christ, and consider how pre-
“ tious was that blood in the sight of God, by
“ which, for our salvation shed, the grace and
“ blessings of *repentance* have been offered to the
“ whole world.”

διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκχύθη
(scil. αἷμα αὐτοῦ) παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ μετανοίας χάριν ὑπένεικεν.

“ let us,” as he goes on, “ consider everie age of
“ the world, and learn, that in everie generation
“ the Lord has given room for repentance in the
“ case of those who have been desirous of return-
“ ing unto him ἐπιστραφῆναι ἐπ’ αὐτόν. Noah preached
“ *repentance*, and they who hearkened to him were
“ saved. Jonah foretold destruction to the Nine-
“ vites, but they repenting of their sins, pacified
“ (or made propitiation to) God by their prayers ;
“ ἐξιλάσθη τὸν Θεὸν ἱκετεύσαντες : and obtained salva-
“ tion, notwithstanding their alienation from him.”

Vid. Clement. Epist. ad Corinth. §. vii. p. 18.

Edit. Colomes. to the same purpose speaks Ter-
tullian ; and that too when treating particularly
and at large upon the very subject itself of re-
pentance. omnibus ergo delictis, seu carne, seu

spiritu, seu facto, seu voluntate commissis, qui pœnam per judicium destinavit, *idem* & veniam per pœnitentiam spondit.---eam, tu peccator, ita invade, ita amplexare, ut naufragus alicujus tabulæ fidem. hæc te peccatorum fluctibusmersum prolevabit, & in portum divinæ clementiæ protelabit. and again; qui per delictorum pœnitentiam instituerat Domino *satisfacere*, diabolo per aliam pœnitentiæ pœnitentiam satisfaciet; eritque tanto magis perosus Deo, quanto æmulo ejus acceptus. Vid. Tertull. de pœnitentiæ, c. iv. and v. again

Fourthly, in the death of Christ we have a most tender and impressive view given us of the inestimable worth and value of immortal souls; that grand, that infinitely momentous point, which if once duly attended to by the human race, not one of them would be found, who was not “working out his own salvation with fear and trembling,” and who would not, through the rich grace and pardoning love of God “in Christ,” that divine love and forgiveness, which have been so signally displayed in the gospel and by the death of Christ, find it accomplished at his entrance upon the world of spirits. how great then, how inexpressibly great must be the power and efficacie of our Savior’s death towards the expiation of our sins, if in connexion with those other considerations, that have been already insisted upon, it appears likewise to be in the most direct and powerful manner adapted to awaken in the mind the most penetrating and lively

ly sense of the importance of those questions once proposed by our Savior himself; "what shall a man profit, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man," what can any other man, even the greatest, the most powerful or wealthie among mankind, "give him in exchange for his soul!" or can any thing be plainer, than that this is indeed it's direct and immediate tendencie? when we recollect that amazing and inexpressible dignitie of our Savior's person, which has been the subject of a preceding chapter, when we compare it with that scorn and most infamous derision, with which he was treated in death, with all the agonies of his cross, with the ignominie of expiring there, under the hands, and through the malice, of some of the worst of men, crucified between two malefactors, whom the law had sentenced to death for the atrociousness of their crimes, how must our minds be lost and altogether confounded in endeavoring to conceive of the stupendous humiliation! a humiliation undergone for our sakes alone, and with a pure and absolute view to the salvation of our souls! how high, how inestimably rich then must be their value in the sight of heaven, and in the infallible judgment and decisions of the eternal Deitie? how great must be our interest in those benevolent counsels, that produced so wonderful an expedient for the salvation of them? what important consequences must be depending upon the regard, that we ourselves are
paying

paying to it? how great must be that salvation itself? and how glorious the happiness, to which by this expedient it is designed to advance us? and how do all these considerations, at once so interesting and so awful, appears to have been written, as it were for our most diligent contemplation and affectionate review, in the blood of our redeemer? but this is a reflexion, that naturally leads us to observe, in the

Fifth place, that the death of Christ is a powerful address to the grateful and ingenuous sentiments of humanitie. and this it is in a double view of it. that is, whether we consider it as the effect of the divine love interesting itself, after so amazing a manner, in our behalf, so that for our sakes God “spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up “for us all;” or whether we consider it, as the result of our Savior’s own condescension and grace, too great for words to express, in dying the “just “for the unjust,” the innocent for the guiltie, the perfectly innocent, on the account and for the sake of the deeply sinful, “that he might bring them “to God.” one might almost expect, that gratitude alone for love like this, might suffice to give it that very efficacie upon our souls. for how otherways can we requite it than by “keeping his “commandments?” by no other means we might have known; had he never said it. but in order to bind the obligation still more particularly and forcibly upon us, and consequently to give a greater
virtue

virtue and efficacie to his death, on which our gratitude is founded, towards effecting our reconciliation with God, he has made it moreover the matter of his own solemn declaration, that this is indeed the very way, in which he expects it to be shewn. here then, as well as in the several particulars, that have been already specified, we have a distinct illustration of the atoning power and influence of the blood of Christ shed upon the cross.

But farther still, in the sixth place, the death of Christ will appear to carry in it a still higher efficacie of this kind, considered in connexion with that exaltation at the right hand of the father, which has been the consequence and the reward of it. the death of Christ was on two accounts a strict and proper sacrifice. first on account of it's atoning efficacie with respect to us; and secondly on account of it's intrinsic merit and acceptableness in the sight of God. even such imperfect virtue, as human frailty can attain to, is frequently spoken of in scripture as a sacrifice and an offering well pleasing and acceptable to the sovereign Deitie. *verum sacrificium*, says Irenæus, *adversus hæres*: lib. iv. c. xxxii. p. 321, 2. and speaking of animal sacrifice appointed under the jewish law and of that moral meaning intended by it, which we have already hinted at in treating upon that subject, insinuates (scil. Deus) *quod offerentes propitiabuntur Deum, ut ab eo vitam percipiant. quemadmodum alibi ait. sacrificium Deo cor contribulatum; odor suavitatis*

tatis Deo, cor clarificans eum qui plasmavit.

with what strict, with what peculiar, with what eminent propriety then is the death of Christ, in which virtue and piety so far surpassing any moral attainments, that humanity has ever reached, were expressed, represented in that light. notwithstanding all the amazing and inexpressible honors of his original state and god-like "form," he condescended to "be found in fashion, as a man:" nor only so, but he "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." wherefore God also has highly "exalted him and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." and from this exaltation thus expressly founded upon the "obedience" and condescensions of "the cross," is derived a very considerable degree of that atoning efficacy, which is in the scripture constantly ascribed to his death. for here we have before us a demonstration in fact, of that regard, which will throughout the whole moral universe be proportionably shewn by the supreme governor of it to all attainments in virtue. thus are we encouraged and animated by the death of Christ, and the joy, upon which he entered in consequence of it, in the pursuit of "righteousness" amidst surrounding difficulties and sorrows; under that firm persuasion so much insisted upon in the writings of the new testament, that, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." how powerful a consideration

deration this towards producing in our minds that spirit of prevailing piety and goodness, which, according to the terms of the gospel-covenant, will be our certain recommendation to the favor of the almighty sovereign! and as in this particular idea of it the death of Christ appears to have such a happy tendency towards producing these moral habits in our minds, we cannot but so far consider it, as being truly expiatory and atoning. the same propitiatory virtue it has distinctly and separately, in all those other views of it, that we have been previously exhibiting. but when we lay all these several particulars together, when we contemplate them in one entire view, and in all their united force and energy, what other conclusion can we possibly acquiesce in but this; that God has “set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.” and still more interesting and efficacious, under this conception of them, are his dying agonies, when we recollect what in the general consideration of it, we have already treated of at large. I mean the example, that in his death he has set us, of inflexible integrity in the cause of truth and virtue, of invincible benevolence to mankind and of absolute resignation to the will of the sovereign and eternal “father.” this is an example on many accounts most excellently adapted to cherish the principle of virtue in our minds, and must therefore proportionably exalt and heighten the propitiatory power and influence of his passion

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upon

upon the cross. in short, such is that amazing degree of moral force and efficacie contained in this single, but most illustrious, dispensation of divine providence, the death of Christ, that I cannot but look upon it, as one of the principal beauties and excellencies of the evangelical writings, that it should so constantly, so frequently, and with such peculiar emphasis, be in them insisted upon, as the great propitiation for the sins of mankind; and as "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." well might the apostle say, that "through him we have received the atonement." through him we have indeed "received the *atonement*." an atonement to be contemplated with the devoutest joy and triumph, to be accepted with the highest gratitude and praise, and to be for ever celebrated both by angels and men, as exhibiting the brightest and most eminent displays of the divine attributes; of the power, wisdom, justice, puritie and infinite compassions of the sovereign and eternal Deitie. and this is

A third particular, which we proposed to insist upon. but after what has been said, I cannot think any large or separate consideration of it to be necessarie in the way of proof or argument; though it is what I would most earnestly recommend, as a subject never to be exhausted in our devout and affectionate meditations. what a conspicuous and striking proof have we here of the sovereigntie, power and majestie of God, who *ap-
pointed*

pointed our blessed Savior, notwithstanding all the original dignitie of his nature, so far superior to that of angels, or of the highest arch-angels, to be “ a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” and who sent him, as his messenger and prophet into this world of ours, this sinful world, and to finish his abode in it by expiring upon the ignominious cross! how eminently does the wisdom of God in this dispensation appear! what a complication of the most important benefits and privileges do we see in this one short and almost momentarie transaction! how signally too in this stupendous scene or rather system of wonders are the righteousness, the justice, the holiness and the puritie of the divine nature displayed! what stronger demonstration could have been given us of these divine attributes, than this, that God would rather send his own Son into the world, in order by the power and energie of his death to influence men to the love and habit of virtue, than admit any one of the human race to favor, without repentance and a conformitie of mind and temper to the laws of his moral government, and to the perfections of his moral nature? how manifestly in this dispensation has the supreme ruler of the world declared himself to be “ just,” even whilst he is the “ justifier of them, who believe in Jesus?” divine justice cannot bend. it will not permit even infinite mercie itself to receive into favor a single sinner, till the image of the divine holiness be re-

restored to his deformed and polluted soul. the puritie of his nature, the majestie of his government, the honor of his laws, do all concur in forbidding, that, when men have "fallen short of the glorie of God," and erased, as it were, the divine image from their nature, by corrupt and sinful habits, they should become the objects of his pardoning mercie, till this image be renewed. what then was the expedient fixed upon by sovereign love, that justice might remain unblemished, and yet our salvation be accomplished? it was, "glorie be to God in the highest," it was to send the "beloved" of the father, "the brightness of his person," into our world, that by the power and efficacie of his death this image might be indeed restored, and by this means his fallen creature man become the object, not only of his pardoning grace, but even of his favor and complacential love. here we see justice in all it's inflexible rigor---love in all it's freedom, richness and glorie. let me only add, that, as in the death of Christ, not only the divine holiness and puritie, not only the clemencie and forgiving mercie of the sovereign being, but everie divine attribute appears to have been thus eminently displayed, it's atoning or propitiatorie influence, must, on this farther account, be rendered infinitely more efficacious. it is evident that nothing can be of higher importance towards producing and cherishing the divine life in our souls, than just conceptions and striking views of the divine attributes

attributes and nature. by the serious and devout
contemplation of them therefore, as displayed in
all their perfection and loveliness, by the propi-
tiation death and sacrifice of the Son of God,
we are surely taking the most effectual me-
thod to have our hearts established in everie chri-
stian grace, and in that "holiness, without which
"no man can see the Lord."

CHAP. V.

C H A P. VI.

On the exaltation of Christ.

BOOK II.

THE three principal points, which, in the preceding chapter we have endeavored to establish, are these: first, that the death of Christ was a true and proper atonement for the sins of mankind; secondly, that its atoning or propitiatory virtue consists in its moral efficacy; and, thirdly, that the efficacy of this kind essentially belonging to it, is so vastly great, so deeply influential and operative, that it is, on this account, an atonement of the most important nature and highest value, every way honorable to the divine perfections, and in every respect answerable and adequate to the wants and necessities of our sinful race. so far as the exaltation of Christ had any connexion with these particulars it has already been briefly touched upon. but I know not any subject, that more naturally demands to be distinctly treated of. in the death of Christ was exhibited an example of inflexible integrity in the cause of truth, of invincible benevolence to mankind, and of absolute resignation and obedience to the will of heaven.

heaven. this is an example, on many accounts, peculiarly well-fited to cherish and invigorate human virtue. it has therefore in the preceding chapter been insisted upon as proportionably heightening the propitiatorie power and influence of his sacrifice and final sufferings. but what now lies before us is, not the effect, which these sufferings were designed to have upon us, but the consequence of them with respect to our Savior himself. “ he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; *wherefore* God also has highly exalted him and given him a name, that is above every name.” and for the complete illustration of this particular it seems necessarie,

First, to enquire into the grounds and reasons of our Savior’s exaltation, as they have been declared and pointed out to us in the sacred scriptures.

Secondly, to specify those dignities and honors, which constitute this exalted state; and then,

Thirdly, to enumerate those practical uses, that shall appear naturally to result, from the discoveries and declarations, that have been made to us in the gospel upon this so interesting and important an article.

First, I say, let us inquire a little more particularly into the grounds and reasons of our Savior’s exaltation, as they have been declared and pointed out to us in the sacred scriptures.

In our first reflexions upon this subject many passages immediately occur to our thoughts, in
which

which his sufferings and death upon the cross seem to be insisted upon as the chief, if not the only reason of his being "seated at the right hand of the father; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." thus by the writer of the epistle to the hebrews we are directed to "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy, that was set before him, endured the *cross*, despising the shame" of it; "and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God." so likewise in the same epistle it is thus argued: "for we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the sufferings of *death* crowned with glorie and honor." to the same purpose is that heavenly song we meet with in the book of Revelation; "worthie is the Lamb, that was *slain*, to receive riches and honor and glorie and blessing." and in the same sense St. Paul has been sometimes understood in his reasoning upon this subject, *Philip.* c. ii. v. 8, 9. and previously to any declarations of this kind made by his apostles, we find a much like representation or view of this particular to have been given by our Savior himself; and which is, as follows: "therefore the father loveth me," and it was to that love alone, that he could owe his exaltation; "therefore the father loveth me, because I lay down my life." yet we cannot in reason imagine, that the death of Christ should be the only instance of his obedience and virtue, that
was

was looked upon with approbation and complacencie by the sovereign Lord of all. we cannot suppose, that all the condescension, which he manifested in becoming incarnate, that all the integrity, zeal and ardor, with which he executed the office of the prophet of the most high God upon earth, throughout the whole course of his divine ministrie, should have contributed nothing to the glories of his exaltation. in such suppositions there is a manifest inconsistency and contrariety of sentiment. accordingly upon farther consideration, we shall find, that the scriptures frequently include these other instances of his obedience, as conspiring with the virtues so eminently displayed in his death to form that consummate character, that ineffable height of merit and moral worth, in recompence of which God has “set him at his own right hand
“in heavenly places, far above all principalities
“and powers, and might, and dominion, and every
“name, that is named, not only in this world,
“but also in that which is to come.” thus, in that passage of the epistle to the Philippians, which has just now been referred to, the apostle observes, that our Savior “being in the form of God, made
“himself of no reputation, and took upon him
“the form of a servant, and being found in
“fashion, as a man, he humbled himself and”
at length, “became obedient unto death, even the
“death of the cross.” where we cannot but conclude it to have been the intention of the apostle to

assign his condescending incarnation with all the humiliation and abasements of his life, in conjunction with the obedience of his death, as the ground and reason of his being thus "highly exalted;" and not to insist separately upon this latter, as the only foundation of that super-eminent dignitie, that has been conferred upon him. and this indeed is what the passage itself literally implies. "for, "as has been justly observed, the expression is, "obedient "unto" death, not only *in* death, but "through his whole life *unto* death." See Beart's Vindication of the eternal Law and everlasting Gospel, Part I. c. iv. p. 47. in the very same manner too it is, that our Savior himself sometimes speaks of his own exaltation and reward. "God, he says, has given him authoritie to execute "judgment also, *because* he is the Son of man;" that is, on account of his incarnation, and of all that he did and taught, as well as suffered, in the character of the Messiah. so likewise in that his solemn prayer or intercession recorded in the xviith chapter of the gospel of St. John, he pleads his having "manifested" the divine perfections to his disciples by those doctrines and instructions, which they were afterwards to communicate to the world, as a ground and reason for his expectation of the glorie, that awaited him. "and now, o father, "glorifie me with thine own self, with the glorie, "which I had with thee before the world was. "I have manifested thy name unto the men, whom
"thou

“ thou gavest me out of the world.” still however, there is an obvious propriety in speaking of our Savior’s exaltation, as being peculiarly connected with his sufferings upon the cross. notwithstanding all the virtue he manifested in his condescending incarnation, notwithstanding all the humilitie, self-denial and benevolence of his god-like life, yet had he not died, the whole of this previous merit would have been totally obliterated ; and he could not, in the estimation of the supreme Deitie, have been intitled to any reward at all. by not submitting to death he would have defeated the whole design of his incarnation and life, renounced his obedience, and abandoned the cause of truth and virtue. but by his death he contracted, as it were, all that obedience, benevolence and love, which he had before exhibited in his appearance among mankind and in continually going about doing good, into one most splendid and heroic act of virtue. by it he absolutely fixed and consummated the merit of his character, as the adorable Savior and redeemer of mankind. well therefore may we say, that “ for the sufferings of death he “ was crowned with glorie and honor.”

Let us now procede, in the second place, to consider more particularly, wherein this “ glorie and “ honor” consist, or, what it is, that constitutes the dignitie and magnificence of his exalted state. now there is one part of this dignitie or glorie, which was the consequence or reward of our Sa-

vior's "obedience unto death," that is even visible and conspicuous here on earth. and that is, the success of his gospel in the world, which was "the Lord's doing, and is so marvelous in our eyes;" the success of that very scheme for the sake of which he died; and the honor of having to the end of time, that vast numbers of mankind, which shall constitute the whole bodie of the christian church from it's commencement to it's dissolution, acknowledging themselves to be subjects of his spiritual and moral kingdom, and submitting themselves to him, as their authoritative and infallible guide, or, as in the language of prophetic it has been expressed, "having the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Christi *merces*, says Irenæus, alledging this very passage advers. hæres. lib. iv. c. xxxviii. p. 338. ex variis & differentibus gentibus in unam cohortem fidei convenientes fiunt homines, quemadmodum Pater promisit ei. *Postula*, dicens, *a me*, &c. and to a being of his god-like benevolence, how intense and ardent indeed must be the joy, to contemplate the exalted virtues, that have been produced and cherished in the heart of man, by the purifying and animating influences of his gospel, all that knowledge, justice, sobriety and peace, that it has introduced into the world; and that glorious "multitude, which no man can number," of those, who, by means of it, have been trained up for a blisful immortalitie! a joy not

not transient like the world itself, in which these effects have taken place, but eternal, as that to which they ultimately tend. and this was a reward too considerable not to be taken notice of as such, by the sacred, evangelical writers. St. Paul, speaking in his epistle to the Galatians professedly upon this very subject, among the other great and distinguishing honors of the redeemer, expressly mentions his being "the head of the bodie, the church." and this "church he purchased with his own blood." it was by shedding it, that he procured to himself the honor of being it's head and founder. and so great an honor did he think it, that for that end he willingly shed it. "he gave himself for us," as the same apostle elsewhere expresses it, "that he might redeem us from all iniquitie, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works;" that he might enjoy the exalted pleasure, the sublime and god-like satisfaction of being the refiner of human nature, and the glorious instrument of divine providence, in establishing a societie upon earth, in which everie virtue, that can adorn and perfect humanitie, should be cultivated with distinguishing "zeal," and shine with a "peculiar" dignitie and lustre. with what triumphant shouts of congratulation; with what loud, repeted acclamations of joy must this glorious founder of the christian faith have been welcomed into the heavenly regions, by those angelic beings,
who

who rejoice even in the conversion of a single sinner! but,

Secondly, of that church or christian society, which was thus founded by our Savior on earth he is now the animating, though invisible, head. to him, upon his glorious ascension into heaven, the affairs and interests of it were committed. knowing this to be a part of the honor designed to be conferred upon him, he assures his disciples, that, upon that ascension, he would "send the comforter, even the Holy Ghost, who should lead them into all truth." and a still more extensive promise of the same kind he gives them after his resurrection. "lo I am with you;" that is, I will support and maintain your cause and interest, "even to the end of the world." and we cannot but observe, what a beautiful correspondence and harmony there is in this designation to the very nature of those services it was intended to reward. he, who first founded the church in his blood, now governs it by his power. he, who, whilst here upon earth manifested such wonderful love and benevolence to mankind in establishing the gospel system and all its inestimable privileges, amongst them, is appointed to be the grand minister of providence, throughout every age of the world, in their behalf, and in carrying on the very same design.

But this leads us, in the third place, to a still more important part of our Savior's exaltation consequent

sequent upon his obedience. and that is his being constituted, under the supreme Deitie, the great dispenser of future happiness, and even of eternal salvation to the children of men. some have supposed, that the reward conferred upon our Lord Jesus Christ, on account of his spotless virtue and consummate merit in becoming the Savior of the world, was the actual grant of pardon, and of happiness immortal, to be bestowed upon mankind, on the conditions specified in the gospel. and it is urged, that to a being of his great, amazing benevolence, nothing could have been a more acceptable reward, than the making others happy on his account, as there is nothing, in which such a being could take a greater satisfaction or be more intensely pleased with. but I cannot find, that this is a representation at all agreeable to the doctrine of the holie scriptures. besides, either this could be no reward at all to our blessed Savior; or, it must be such a one, as reflects very high dishonor upon the divine perfections, upon the essential goodness of the sovereign mind. if these blessings would have been bestowed upon mankind, in consequence of the original benevolence and clemencie of the supreme Deitie, even though our blessed Savior had never appeared in the world, then with no sort of propriety, can they be considered, as his reward, as a grant or donation to him. if they are his reward at all, it must needs be in such a sense, as that, if he had not appeared in the world. mankind could
never

never have been pardoned or made happy. but is not this imputing a greater efficacie towards the production of happiness to our Savior's merit, than to the goodness of God himself? for, upon this supposition, the former is the exciting cause of all the happiness, that is hereafter to be enjoyed by mankind; and it is in subserviencie to that, and not to the dictates of his own free, essential goodness, that the power of Deitie operates in effecting it. what is it that can make the happiness conferred upon others to be a reward to Christ, but his benevolence, or the pleasure he would take in being the author of it, and in knowing, that it was on his account they became possessed of it? but if the supreme Deitie would not have taken, at least, as much pleasure in communicating the same quantity of happiness, out of his own pure and absolute goodness, as, according to this notion, he is supposed to communicate, incited by an adventitious and extraneous motive arising from our Savior's merit, what does this necessarily and unavoidably implicate, but a greater degree of benevolence in the character of the redeemer of mankind, than in that of the sovereign creator and Lord of the universe? and it does, I think, appear very evidently in the scriptures, that the reward conferred upon our blessed Savior for the sake of his illustrious and most exalted merit, was, not the blessings themselves of pardon, peace and immortalitie, to be on his account bestowed upon mankind, but the

the office of distributing or dispensing them. “ him
“ has God exalted to be a prince and a Savior to
“ give repentance and forgiveness of sins.” this
indeed may possibly be meant of the power and
efficacie of that gospel, of which he is the author,
towards promoting “ repentance” and, in conse-
quence, securing “ the remission of sins ;” and
in this view is to be refered to the topic, that was
first insisted upon, in illustrating this second parti-
cular. but it may very justly too be understood of
that high office, to which our Savior has been *ex-
alted* at the “ right hand of God.” according to
the very nature of this office all the divine influ-
ences, that are necessarie for producing a sincere
and genuin repentance, together with the pardon,
peace and joy resulting from it, are through his
mediation transmitted to the children of men.
but it is not the pardon or remission of sins alone,
that is thus through his instrumentalitie conveyed.
in the very same manner it is, that all the blessings
and joys of the heavenly world, all the rewards and
honors of the future and immortal state are dis-
pensed to mankind. “ the gift of God is eternal
“ life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” it is the
“ gift,” the free, unmerited “ gift,” the absolute,
unpurchased favor of God ; but it is conveyed by
the agencie of Jesus Christ, as the great dispenser
of happiness and salvation to the children of men.
and to this high office, with which he was to be in-
vested, our Savior himself has often directed our
O o thoughts.

thoughts. “as thou hast given him power,” he says, speaking of his own future exaltation, “over
 “all flesh” all mankind, “that he should give
 “eternal life to as many, as thou hast given him,”
 to all his sincere and genuin disciples. “my
 “sheep,” as his language is again, “hear my
 “voice; and I give unto them eternal life.” and
 once more, it is in these remarkable words, that,
 upon another occasion he expresses himself. “as
 “the father has life in himself so has he *given* to
 “the Son to have life in himself,” that is happi-
 ness under his disposal; “and to execute judgment
 “also,” to be the impartial distributor of the re-
 wards and honors of a future world, as well as of
 it’s punishments and woe. and why; “because
 “he is the Son of man.” on this account it is,
 that “our life” is said to be “hid with Christ in
 “God.” our life, that is our happiness, has been
 deposited by the supreme, eternal author of all
 good, in the hands of the redeemer, to be by him
 transfered and communicated to us, the happy ob-
 jects of his over-flowing mercie. thus highly has
 God exalted him, constituted him the minister of
 his grace to mankind, lodged our everlasting in-
 terests in his hands, and given him authoritie, as
 the immediate representative of his own supreme
 majestie, to distribute the blessings of eternitie. I
 will not so much as attempt to describe either the
 dignitie of this office, or the sublime satisfactions,
 that must attend the faithful execution of it.

words

words are not equal to the subject ; and even imagination itself sinks under the weight of it. and yet, in the

Fourth place, there is another part of our Savior's exaltation totally distinct from any thing, that has hitherto been mentioned ; and which cannot but prodigiously heighten and aggrandize our idea of it. the dominion I mean, with which he is invested over the angelical world, and the homage, that is paid to him by all the angelic powers. this dominion and homage are clearly and very frequently asserted in the scriptures. and not only so ; but we are there likewise informed, that it was not a dominion originally belonging to our Savior ; not an adoration, that had from the beginning been paid to him ; but, that they were the consequence of his obedience in becoming incarnate, in living, suffering and dying for our sakes, and intended for the reward of it. thus expressly in a passage already cited ; " wherefore," that is, on account of his " obedience unto death," just before mentioned, " God also has highly exalted him, and given " him a name above every name, that at the name " of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in " heaven and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth. and it was at his incarnation, and not before, that the decree went forth, injoining homage and adoration to be paid him by the angelic host. " when he bringeth in," as the writer to the hebrews expresses himself upon the subject, " the

O o 2 " first-

“ first-begotten, into the world, he says ; and let
 “ all the angels of God worship him.” though
 it is probable, that this decree was not actually put
 into execution, till after his ascension. with this
 St. Peter evidently seems to connect it, and as fol-
 lowing upon it. “ who is gone into heaven, so runs
 “ the passage I refer to, and is on the right hand
 “ of God ; angels and authorities and powers be-
 “ ing made subject unto him.” thus is that con-
 descending Savior, who was once treated with the
 basest insolence and contempt by the most infamous
 of mankind, now worshiped and adored by the
 highest of the angelic orders. and having thus
 endeavored to illustrate the two first of the parti-
 culars proposed to be in this chapter discussed, let
 us procede, in the third place,

To point out the practical uses arising out of this
 doctrine of our Savior's exaltation. and indeed a
 subject it is so great and elevated, that in considering
 this moral improvement to be made of the doctrine
 in general, we shall be much nearer to a level with
 our own capacities, than in attempting to form any
 distinct or accurate idea, in particular, concerning
 the “ power, the riches, the wisdom, the honor,
 “ the glorie and the blessing,” with which the
 Lord Jesus Christ is now invested at the right hand
 of the supreme, eternal Deitie. and the reflexion
 of this kind, which first presents itself to our
 thoughts, is that, which the apostle himself has
 suggested in his farther reasoning upon the subject,
 as

as it occurs in the fore-cited epistle to the Philip-
pians; "that everie tongue should confesse, that
"Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glorie of God the
"Father;" to the honor and illustration of the
divine perfections. and how eminently indeed are
they displayed in this dispensation of the divine
moral government? for the discoverie of which,
let it be recollected, it is to the gospel alone, that
we can be indebted. what a demonstration have
we here of that inexhaustible power of God, by
which he is enabled to be, throughout the endless
ages of eternitie, the liberal "rewarder of those,
"who diligently seek him?" when we reflect up-
on the amazing, the inconceivable dignitie of our
Savior's præ-existent and primeval state, and re-
count in our minds the various particulars of it, as
recorded in the new testament, we might be almost
tempted to think it impossible, that such a being, a
being in the original splendor and excellencies of
his nature so transcendently great, should be capa-
ble of exaltation. yet we see, with what new
"honors" he has been "crowned;" and, what
magnificent rewards have been bestowed upon him,
out of the immense and endless treasures of om-
nipotence. how manifestly too in this dispensation
has the supreme being declared himself to be "the
"righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness?" and
by conferring such super-eminent honors upon such
distinguished merit, how evidently does he appear
to be that impartial governor of the moral universe,
who

who will "recompense to" all his intelligent and reasonable creatures of everie rank and order, "according to their works." and in the exaltation of Christ, as well as by his appearance, in conformitie to the appointment of soveraign Deitie, upon earth, what a striking and incontestable proof have we of the love and compassion of the divine Being towards his creature, man. for, "wherefore" did he "exalt" him, but for the love, the wonderful condescending love, that he had shewn to our race? how pretious then in the sight of God must be the welfare of our immortal souls, in the promoting of which this love consisted? and how evident must be even from hence alone, to those, who acknowlege the divinitie of the christian oracles, the utter, absolute, impossibilitie, that any one of these souls, should by the supreme creator of it have been doomed to irretrievable and eternal miserie? has that being, who "exalted" our Lord Jesus Christ to such distinguished honors, purely on account of his love to souls, himself expressed such implacable enmitie against them? it cannot be.

Secondly, in the exaltation of our blessed Savior the supreme being has pointed out to us, in the plainest and most explicit manner, how it is, that we ourselves may hope to obtain a share in the felicities and honors of the heavenly and eternal state. God is one, not only in the simplicitie of his essence, but also in the immutabilitie of his attributes.

butes. it must therefore be by following the example of that pietie and virtue, the perfection of which in the great redeemer was the foundation of those high and eminent rewards, to which he is now advanced, that we likewise are to “seek after” glorie, honor, and immortalitie.” in all speculative points of religion our Lord was absolutely free from error. so that, if any being in the universe could have ever justly pleaded the merit of opinion, it must have been this adorable Savior of human kind. yet it is observable, that there is not the least stress laid, either by himself or by his apostles, upon right opinion, in connexion with those rewards and honors, that were conferred upon him by the supreme governor of the universe. but his obedience, his humilitie, his pietie, his benevolence are always insisted upon as being the sole ground and foundation of them. in these rewards and honors therefore we have two most important principles inculcated upon us. the one that nothing can be so effectual for our obtaining the divine favor, as the being possessed of the divine image, and the cultivating every generous and god-like virtue. the other, that this is a method, which most certainly will be available to that end. what better track can we follow, if we do indeed aspire to the favor of the Almighty, than that, which our blessed Savior pursued with steadie pace and undaunted resolution, till advanced into the highest degree of it? or how can we entertain a doubt, where

BOOK II.

when we reflect upon the immutabilitie of the divine nature, in conjunction with that infinite benevolence, which constitutes it's sovereign glorie, of sharing in proportion to the conformitie, which we do actually bear, in the temper and disposition of our minds, to the virtues of our blessed Savior, of sharing, I say, with him, in the complacencie of the great creator, and in all those glorious and blessed effects, that must necessarily be the result of it? or could there be any room for suspecting the justness of our own reasoning in such deductions and inferences, as these, from a doctrine of the scriptures, yet has the gospel itself in the most explicit terms established them. and this at once for our consolation and direction. when our blessed Lord is said, to have entered into the veil, as our "fore-runner," this plainly implies, that in his example the way has been pointed out to us, in which we are to aim at the heavenly happiness, and that in his exaltation the amplest assurances have been given us of the success of it. and for the same reason undoubtedly it is, that we are exhorted to "run our christian race with patience"--- "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy, that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." why should we "look at," or be thus especially called upon to contemplate, him in the glories of his exaltation, if not for our encouragement

agement in the hope and firm persuasion, that by a patient and persevering imitation of his example we also may become intitled to some blisful mansion above? accordingly we are by the apostle expressly assured, that, “if we suffer with him, we shall also
“be glorified together.” and by the same inspired writer, it is in another epistle recorded as a
“*faithful* saying, that, “if we be dead with
“him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer
“with him, we shall also reign with him.” so that in scripture the advancement of Christ at the right hand of God is plainly considered, as being a sacred, solemn, divine promise given to mankind, that so far as they make it their ambition to resemble the graces, so far, as they regulate and govern their affections by the model, of his example, they shall not fail of obtaining a share in the felicities of that immortal world, in which he
“reigns,” and that, as “without holiness no
“man shall see the Lord,” so, on the other hand, by the prevailing habit of it in the soul, we shall most certainly be qualified for that beatific vision. “how wisely,” says Mr. Baxter, in his Life of Faith, Treatise II. c. iv. No. 30, 1. p. 106.
“hath God ordered it, that, when death is naturally so terrible to man, we should have a Savior, that went that way before us, and was
“once dead, but now liveth, and is where we must
“be, and hath the keys of death and heaven,
“that we may boldly go forth as to his presence,

On the exaltation of Christ.

“ and to the innumerable perfected spirits of the
 “ just, and may commend our souls to the hands
 “ of our redeemer and our head. as also, that
 “ this should be *plainly revealed*, and that the
 “ scriptures are written in a method and a manner
 “ fit for all---and that ministers be commanded to
 “ open and apply it, by translation, exposition, and
 “ earnest exhortation; that the remedy may be fited
 “ to the nature and extent of the disease.”

But once more, thirdly, in the exaltation of our Lord Jesus we have some pleasing and important intimations given us with respect to the *nature* of the heavenly felicitie, as well as in relation to the infallibly sure and certain method of obtaining it. how easily may we believe it's eternal progression, when we consider, that even “ the only-begotten
 “ of the father,” who had from “ the begining” been an inhabitant of the heavenly world, was yet capable of receiving additional honors, upon his ascension into it, after a life of obedience, piety and virtue here on earth? again, the principal and most distinguishing part of our Savior's heavenly dignitie consists in his being a dispenser of peace and happiness. “ the whole system,” says Mr. Baxter likewise in the treatise just now referred to, c. v. p. 108, 9. “ of (our religion) is the harmonious expression of God's holiness and love. the
 “ particulars I must but name, lest I be too long.
 “ I. The author of it, Jesus Christ, was perfectly
 “ good himself; being God and man sinless in nature
 “ ture

“ ture and in life, living and dying and rising to
“ do good, and making it his *office* and even his
“ work, even in heaven, to do mankind the great-
“ est good.” we may from hence very naturally
conclude, and are countenanced in it by many pas-
sages occuring in the sacred writings, that much of
our own happiness in that blisful world is to result
from mutual offices of friendship and love. a
consideration, that should highly endear that tem-
per to us now, and convince us of the folly, vanitie
and presumption of indulging any bitter, implaca-
ble, malicious dispositions, and at the same time,
hoping for an admission, even whilst thus cor-
rupted and depraved, into that blessed world;
where all is love and charitie, harmonie and good-
will.

C H A P. VII.

On the intercession of Christ.

BOOK II.

CONCERNING the employment and actions of our glorious redeemer, in that his exalted state at “the right hand” of the father, of which we have in the preceding chapter been taking a brief and summarie review, the scripture does not enter into any great varietie of particulars. and for this reason probably, that it is a subject, as yet too sublime for our faculties ; a subject reserved for our entertainment and delight, in that future world of glorie, to which we ourselves shall ere long be exalted, if, through the efficacious influences of his wonderful love and condescension in becoming incarnate for our sakes, of his most excellent precepts, his admirable doctrines, his spotless example, and his atoning death, we are raised to “newness of life,” and “made partakers of “the divine nature” by the prevailing similitude of our own tempers and dispositions to those moral perfections, that constitute the sovereign glories of it. nevertheless there is one remarkable particular upon this head, that has been, as it were, selected in
the

the counsels of unerring wisdom, as proper to be discovered and made known unto mankind by the dispensation of the gospel; and which we find accordingly to be most expressly and plainly insisted upon in the records of our most holy faith. what I mean, is the intercession of Christ; the intercession he is now making in our behalf before the throne of the divine and sovereign majesty. "he ever liveth to make intercession for us. if any man sin we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous, who," as it is elsewhere expressed, "is not entered into the holie place, made with hands," into that peculiarly sacred part of the temple at Jerusalem, "into which went the high priest alone once every year, which are the figures of the true," which are at best but shadows and faint emblems of "things infinitely more magnificent and great, that have been in the gospel discovered to us; but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us;"---as an intercessor with the father in our cause, and with reference to our highest interest, even the welfare of our immortal spirits. and there is no doubt to be made, but that this particular transaction carried on by the great redeemer in his present state of exaltation and glorie has been thus explicitly made known on account of it's eminent usefulness and peculiarly happy tendencie towards enforcing that, which is the grand and ultimate design of the whole christian.

stian institution; and which is no other than the moral purification of our minds, and the forming our tempers to the prevailing habits of universal piety and the sincerest virtue. what St. Paul observes in relation to the sacred scriptures of the old testament, is with still more eminent propriety applicable to every peculiar discovery of the gospel. "it is profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God," the devout and serious professor of religion, "may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work." in treating therefore upon the proposed subject of this chapter, the intercession of Christ, we shall pursue the following method.

First, we shall consider, wherein the intercession of Christ consists; or, what is the precise, determinate idea, or notion, that we are to form concerning it;

Secondly, inquire into the grounds and reasons, upon which it is founded;

Thirdly, endeavor to shew, in what manner it stands connected with the final and everlasting salvation of mankind. and then,

Fourthly, point out the many great advantages arising from this peculiar discovery of the gospel, in reference to the present improvement of our minds in virtue.

First then, let us inquire, wherein the intercession of Christ consists, or what is the precise, determinate

terminate idea, or notion, that we are to form concerning it. the original word, by which it is in the new testament expressed, is of a very general signification, so as to be applicable to any kind of interposition or mediation made, in behalf of an offending partie; whether it be that of power and authoritie, that of instruction, persuation and admonition addressed to the offender himself, and intended to promote his humiliation and repentance; or, lastly, that of supplication and intreatie made to the being, against whom the offence has been committed. so that the whole of our Savior's great and wonderful undertaking for the salvation of mankind may justly be considered, and spoken of, as his intercession in their behalf. and therefore, in the language of prophetic, referring perhaps to the whole œconomie of the gospel, or, more probably, in an especial and peculiar manner, to the death of Christ upon the cross, he is said, even whilst here upon earth, to "have made intercession for the transgressors." nevertheless, when it is observed by the author of the epistle to the hebrews, that "he is able to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," here is evidently a reference, not to any thing that had been done by our Lord, during his state of incarnation, but to what he is now transacting in his state of exaltation, at the "right hand of the father." and the same meaning is equally obvious

in that other passage, that has been just now cited from St. John; “if any man sin we have an advocate with the father:” there is one now standing in the presence of the father, who sustains the character of our “advocate” and intercessor. and this intercession, which is continually made by our blessed Lord in the heavenly world, and on our account, consists in his pleading for us; his offering up the most earnest supplications and entreaties to the supreme father of mercies in our behalf, and for our sakes. this is the idea, which our Savior himself has taught us to form of it. “I will *pray* the father,” such expressly is his language to the disciples, “and he will give you another comforter;” referring to the miraculous gifts of the holie ghost, which, in these words he assures them, he would intercede for, upon his ascension into heaven. and still more generally, and with a reference, undoubtedly, not only to his immediate disciples, the apostles, but to all in common, who should profess themselves his followers, he declares, “at that day,” meaning, when he shall be ascended, “ye shall ask in my name, and I will *pray* the father for you.” so that the whole seventeenth chapter of St. John’s gospel, which consists intirely of one solemn, expressive and most affectionate prayer, offered up to his father by our blessed Savior, whilst here upon earth, and in behalf, not of his immediate disciples alone, but, of “all, who should believe in his name,” may justly be considered

considered as an exact specimen or model, of what he CHAP. VII.
is now doing in heaven, under the character of our
advocate, or intercessor. this point then being suf-
ficiently clear, we may go on to inquire,

Secondly, into the grounds, or reasons, upon which
this intercession is founded. and these are in general
the attributes of God, considered in connexion with
the merits of the Savior himself and the consummate
dignitie and perfection of his moral character. in
treating upon the exaltation of Christ, we observ-
ed, that the principal and most illustrious part of
it consists in his being constituted the great dis-
penser of all spiritual, heavenly and eternal blef-
sings unto the children of men. it is through his
hands, that these blessings are transmitted to us.
but it is from the essential goodness of the " God
" and father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that they
originally flow, and to which in our thanksgivings
and praises we are ultimately to ascribe them. now
of this great, momentous truth, our Savior's inter-
cession with the father for these very blessings to be
bestowed upon us, is a solemn acknowlegment.
he does by this act own and recognize the sove-
reign Deitie, as the supreme source and origin of
those blessings, which he himself is empowered to
confer. and from the ardor of his pietie, even
whilst here upon earth, from that constancie and
that elevation of spirit, with which he addicted
himself to it's various exercises, with what chear-
fulness and alacritie, with what reverent adoration,

Q q

with

On the intercession of Christ.

with what fervencie of devotion, may we not conclude this solemn act of homage to the supreme creator and Lord of heaven and earth, to be performed by our redeemer in his immediate presence? but farther,

Secondly, as our blessed Savior, whilst here on earth, we well know to have been alike exemplarie in his benevolence and love to man, as in his pietie and devotion towards the eternal source and fountain of good, how then can we wonder, that he should be an intercessor on our behalf, now that he is seated on “the right hand of the majestie on high?” a wonder surely it must have been both to men and angels, if he had not. what! can we believe it even possible, that the condescending Savior of mankind, who once left the regions of immortalitie for our sakes, and who died upon the ignominious cross for our salvation, could so soon forget the very souls he died to save, as never, in his heavenly acts of adoration, to urge one plea in our behalf, or so much as offer up a single request to God on our account? rather may we not, even independently of scripture-information in this particular, most certainly conclude, that he, who, when on earth, was so sincere and ardent a promoter of human salvation, must needs, now that he is sat down in heavenly places at “the right hand” of the Almighty, soveraign Deitie, be a most importunate sollicitor in our cause and with the tenderest affection for our immortal interests?

terests? there is not any thing, in which the piety and benevolence of mankind so naturally express themselves, as in earnest prayers, fervent wishes and reiterated intercessions, for the welfare of others. and in the very same manner do our Savior's piety and benevolence express themselves in heaven. so that his intercession there may justly be looked upon, as a continuation of the example, that he has set us here. but,

Thirdly, the intercession of Christ is, not only thus evidently founded in nature and reason, in the genuine and universal dictates of piety and virtue, but it is also admirably adapted for suggesting to our minds a great variety of the most interesting and important reflexions relative to our moral improvement and everlasting welfare. nothing therefore can be more probable than that, in order to give greater weight and efficacy to these considerations, he did, according to the original designation and appointment of the father, undertake this office with peculiar circumstances of solemnity. we may naturally presume, that it is considered, both by the great redeemer himself, as well as by the surrounding heavenly hierarchy, as one of his most appropriate characters; as one of the most important and interesting relations, in which he stands to our race; that for these several reasons it is by him carried on with a peculiar tenderness and affection; and that all this was expressly intended to be intimated to us in the language of scripture

upon this head, and by the explicit title given to him of our advocate or intercessor. this language and characteristical appellation were not intended to inform us merely, that he does in fact intercede for us, but, that it is his appointed and peculiarly solemn office, thus to act in our behalf. what these moral advantages and uses arising from the intercession of Christ are in particular, it is the business of our fourth or concluding topic of argument upon this subject to point out. the sentiment which we would here insist upon is, that, as this intercession is, not only in the general idea and notion of it the immediate and natural suggestion of our Savior's piety and benevolence, but is likewise carried on by virtue of a special character or office, with which he has been in the most solemn manner invested, this is a consideration, by which these advantages must be prodigiously increased, and the moral uses to be made of the doctrine in the most efficacious manner enforced; its importance heightened; its aspect rendered vastly more striking and venerable, and our attention to it almost necessarily and irresistibly engaged. but we are now, in the

Third place, according to the method at first proposed, to inquire, in what manner our Savior's intercession in the view that has now been given of it, stands connected with the final and everlasting salvation of mankind. this is an inquiry, to which we are naturally led by the reasonings, which we find

find to have been made use of by the author of ^{CHAP. VII.} the epistle to the hebrews. “wherefore he is
“able,” such is the argument I refer to, “to save
“them to the uttermost, who come unto God by
“him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession
“for them. Christ’s abilitie to “save to the ut-
“termost all, who come unto God by him,” is
founded upon that high, magnificent office of dis-
pensing the blessings and glories of eternal life,
which has been conferred upon him by the father.
this office the author of that epistle very naturally
and beautifully compares to the levitical priesthood,
insisting at the same time upon it’s vastly superior
dignitie and importance. among other points of
difference, he had been mentioning in a verse or two
preceding, the constant succession of priests under
the mosaic law, on account of that mortalitie, to
which all of them were alike subject. “and they
“truly were many priests, because they were not
“suffered to continue by reason of death.” “but
“this man,” or rather, this person; a rendering,
which the original does with equal proprietie ad-
mit; “because he continueth forever, has an un-
“changeable priesthood.” and upon this obser-
vation it is, that he grounds that conclusion;
“wherefore he is able also to save them to the ut-
“most, who come unto God by him.” and the
observation itself for the sake of enforcing more
strongly the general argument is immediately re-
peated; though perhaps with some varietie of mean-
ing;

ing; “seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.” by “making intercession for us” may here be understood that very office of dispensing the divine favors to the children of men, before spoken of under the notion of a priesthood, and as implying an ability to “save to the uttermost:” since by virtue of this office our Savior is that “intermediate” person, through whose hands the blessings of salvation are originally derived from the supreme fountain of all blessings and ultimately conferred upon us. and then the meaning of the passage will be, that “Christ is able to save to the uttermost,” because he is not a mortal man like the priests under the law, whose power was limited by death, and subjected to the infinite uncertainty of the time, when they should become its victims; but “liveth forever to make intercession for us;” or in possession of that high character and office, with which he was invested at his admission into heaven; and by which investiture, according to the very nature and design of that office, he was constituted the grand medium of all divine communications to the children of men. but by the intercession of Christ we may likewise understand, that distinct character or office, which he sustains, as our *advocate* with the father, who is continually urging our cause in heaven, presenting our sincere and humble virtue, as a “sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing in the sight of God,” deprecating his wrath and displeasure on account of our sins, pleading

pleading the boundless extent and unmeasurable fulness of his forgiving mercie, rejoicing, for our sakes, in the contemplation of it, and making our peace, our happiness and our final salvation, the subject of his most importunate request and fervent prayers. and according to this view of the apostle's meaning in this particular expression, the whole argument including the immediate context, will run thus. Christ, in the sense that has been already given, is "able to save unto the uttermost all, who "come unto God by him," seeing, or because, as he is not a mortal priest, like those under the law, so neither will those exalted virtues, on account of which he has been raised to the high dignity and honor of being the immediate instrument and agent of sovereign Deitie in the salvation of man, ever suffer the least diminution or decay. "he ever "liveth to make intercession for us." and this intercession is no other than one uninterrupted exercise of the same piety and virtue, for the sake of which he has been thus super-eminently "crowned with "glorie and honor." in the possession therefore of these exalted glories, we may certainly conclude he will remain; that virtue, worth and merit, for the sake of which they were at first conferred, thus appearing to be the same. but what, it may be asked, are we to understand by the particular description or character given of those, whom he is thus "able to save to the uttermost?" they are such, we see, as "come unto God by him." "to
"come

“ come unto God by Christ,” is to seek the divine favor, approbation and mercie, according to the method, which Christ has pointed out for that purpose. this method is no other, than that of sincere repentance and uncorrupted virtue. from whence we may draw this very pleasing and delightful conclusion, that those may “ come unto “ God by Christ,” and consequently, according to the very letter of this text, participate in all the blessings of that salvation, which he is impowered to bestow, who have even never heard of Christ. for, notwithstanding their ignorance of him and of his gospel, either they must have it in their power to conform themselves to the rules of virtue and religion ; or else not be accountable for transgressing them. and every one, whose temper is indeed conformed to the genuin maxims of virtue and pietie, whether he knows any thing concerning Christ, or not, does still “ come unto God *by* “ him,” being one, who seeks the divine mercie and favor, in the very method, which Christ himself has prescribed as effectual for obtaining them. and having thus briefly touched upon the three preceding particulars, I would go on, in the

Fourth place, to point out the many great advantages arising from this doctrine of the intercession of Christ, and the moral uses, that it is so directly and admirably adapted to answer.

And first ; this surely, is a doctrine, that displays to our view, after the most expressive manner, the
superlative

superlative and transcendent honors of the divine majestie. it is, as we have seen, a most solemn act of homage paid to the sovereign of the universe. to intercede with him for blessings to be bestowed upon mankind, is an explicit and most devout acknowledgement of him, as that one supreme fountain of mercie and blessedness, from which alone they can be derived. and this is an homage offered, this is an acknowledgement made by that very being, who next to the one infinite and sovereign Deitie himself, is the highest and most illustrious in the whole scale of intellectual and moral natures. well might our Savior, whilst here upon earth, declare, my father "is greater than I," since this is the very sentiment, which he is continually acknowledging even amidst all the glories of his heavenly and exalted state! how must it raise and elevate the idea, which angels themselves had formed of the majestie of God, when they see even the Savior of the world, and him, by whom he did at first create it, a prostrate suppliant before his throne! and with what profound and awful reverence should we approach in our acts of religious praise and adoration this supreme and infinitely glorious being! but the intercession of Christ is likewise, on another account, in the highest degree honorable to the perfections of Deitie. it is an incontestable proof of the divine placabilitie. for what foundation could there be for it, if not in this essential attribute of the Almighty? what father knowing himself

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to be implacable and resolved not to pardon, would appoint any one to intercede with him for pardoning mercie? or what Son, who knew this to be the father's character, would ever think of making such intercession? and for these reasons we may observe, in the

Second place, that the doctrine of Christ's intercession is, not only, in the highest degree, honorable to God, but likewise full of consolation to man. it carries in it a clear and most convincing proof of the divine, forgiving mercie, not only additional to the doctrine and light of nature upon this head, but greatly heightening the peculiar evidence of the christian revelation in favor of it. and this is apparently the reasoning of the apostle, when he says; "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the father." so long, as we have an intercessor with the father, we may rest assured, that the sovereign father himself is a being disposed to forgive, and "plenteous in mercie." and how eminently does the excellencie of the gospel appear in this accumulation of it's evidences, in proof of a point, that is of all others the most essential to the happiness of a fallen and guiltie creature?

Thirdly, the intercession of Christ, is a most striking and forcible example of tenderness and compassion. "we have not, as we have seen, an high priest, that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," but, who in the midst of all his resplendent, heavenly, spotless glories,
"ever

“ ever liveth, making intercession for us,” and recommending us, notwithstanding all our imperfections and follies, to the throne of mercie. how tenderly then should we “ feel” for one another ! how odious ! how monstrous ! how unnatural, not to be “ touched with the infirmities” of one another ! in a man, a sinful man, not to observe the moral infirmities of his own kind, with candor, with suspense of judgment, with forbearance and a forgiving spirit ! in a weak, a mortal man, liable himself to a thousand misfortunes and difficulties, not to look upon the external and bodily “ infirmities” of his fellow-creatures with the tenderest sympathie and love ! and how amazingly, how inexpressibly arrogant must it be in the greatest of mankind to think, that the infirmities, or the miseries even of the meanest, should be beneath his notice ; when the exalted Son of God himself, compassionating our weaknesses, condescends to be our advocate on high ! but,

Fourthly, our Savior’s intercession at the right hand of God, as well as many other glorious peculiarities of the gospel, reflects the highest honor upon the human nature, and should therefore teach us to reverence ourselves. is it possible for us to conceive of any greater dignitie, that could have been conferred upon it, than, that the well-beloved and only-begotten of the father, surrounded, as he is, and clothed with the most resplendent honors of the heavenly state, should be a perpetual inter-

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cessor, on our behalf, before the infinite majestie of heaven and earth? in what absurd and manifest contradiction must we act to the judgment, the views and desires of this glorious being, if we contaminate and debase a nature thus honorable in his sight by the indulgences and gratifications of sense? ought we not rather, out of a noble and generous ambition of acting in concurence with a being of such illustrious dignitie, to be purifying ourselves from all "filthiness both of the flesh and of the "spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the "Lord," that thus we may 'ere long attain to that complete salvation, our everlasting enjoyment of which, this gracious and benevolent redeemer is making the matter of his most intense and ardent wish before the throne of the most high? but these reflexions naturally lead us to observe farther, in the

Fifth place, that by the intercession of Christ all those obligations to a life of virtue and religion, which are founded upon gratitude for that condescending love, which he has manifested to the children of men, are prodigiously increased and rendered everie way complete. so that in all the particulars of it laid together we have a system of moral motives intirely peculiar to the gospel, and that is full of the most entertaining varietie and forcible perswasion. when we reflect upon the amazing condescension of the Son of God in becoming incarnate for our sakes, when we review the

the labors, sufferings, sorrows and reproches, which he endured on our account, when we meditate upon the divine precepts and heavenly doctrines he inculcated with such an earnest zeal for our everlasting salvation, when we recollect the adorable wonders of his dying passion and contemplate the bleeding agonies of his cross, when we follow him in our ascending thoughts to the heavenly immortal world, and view him there displaying in his intercession for us the same benevolence and tender compassion towards our race, shall not such "love" as this, such mightie, generous love "constrain us?"

Lastly, in the intercession of Christ we see the reasonableness of interceding with God in our own prayers on the behalf of others. "I exhort," says the apostle, "that supplications, prayers, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and for all, that are in authoritie, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honestie." and the obligation of this evangelical precept must needs be in the strongest manner enforced upon everie christian, by the example of our Savior's own intercession at the right hand of the father. against this particular part of prayer, and indeed against all supplicatorie addrestes to the divine Being it has been alleged, that God cannot be moved by our intreaties. now it is equally true, and in the very same sense, that he cannot be moved by the entreaties or intercession of Christ. he is absolutely immutable. and there is

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not, there cannot in the whole universe of God exist, that being, who can produce in him the least "variableness or shadow of turning." yet we see, that for the intercession of Christ, there is the clearest foundation in the sentiments of virtue and piety, and that it is indeed an immediate and natural expression of those very sentiments. we see likewise, how great and excellent are the moral uses, which it answers with respect to ourselves. and can any objection lie against our expressing the virtuous feelings, the tender sympathies, the devout emotions of our minds, as nearly as we can, in the manner of the redeemer himself, and in the very language, as we may say, that is by him made use of for this purpose? what, though it must be utterly and for ever impossible, that any moral benefits, precisely the same, should arise from our intercessions, as from his, yet are there not other distinct and separate uses, of the same moral nature in general, to be answered by them? do they not dilate our charity? and, whilst in this deliberate, solemn, fervent manner we express it, are we not taking the most effectual method for cherishing and improving it? are they not calculated to produce in our minds an humble and reverential sense of the supreme Deity's absolute controul over the intire system of nature, and of our own and other beings total dependance upon him for the accomplishment of every wish, that our hearts can form? have they not a natural tendencie to strengthen our
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cheerful confidence in him, as the most gracious and unerring disposer of all events? do we not in these our intercessions before the throne of his mercie acknowledge and adore him, as the universal father? and, whilst we thus devoutly contemplate him under this most lovely character, may not our own minds be charmed and exalted into some nearer resemblance to it? and, on all these accounts, might not the apostle most justly say, as he does, in the words immediately following those, which have just now been cited from one of his epistles to Timothie, concerning this dutie of intercession, when religiously and reverently performed, and in conjunction with those other parts of prayer, which he there enumerates; “ for this is good and
“ acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who
“ will have all men to be saved and to come unto
“ the knowlege of the truth.” upon this dutie of intercession we have a number of charming, delightful and awakening thoughts in the twenty-first chapter of Mr. Law’s *Serious Call*; which I can almost think it impossible for any one to read over without perceiving his obligation to it. see p. 293---298. 300---306. 309---12. of that book. but let me now conclude this chapter in the words of a very useful author, and urge upon myself and others the “ living so, as it may be *fit* for Christ
“ with *honor* to present our works and services to
“ his father to be accepted by him; to do nothing
“ but what is *worthie* of such a Mediator as Christ
“ is,

“ is, to present unto God on our behalf. “ now,
 “ tell me, is any act of profaneness, sin and wick-
 “ edness, *a fit action* for Christ to take and present
 “ unto his father for divine acceptance? certainly
 “ our actions must have the *truth*, though not the
 “ *perfection* of good works: for otherwise it were
 “ a thing *unbecoming* Christ to present them, and
 “ *unbecoming* God to *accept* them: for in so doing,
 “ Christ must become a *Patron* of sin, and God
 “ an owner of the work, and an encourager of the
 “ workers of iniquitie. o then take care, that
 “ your actions be such, as may be *fit* to be pre-
 “ sented by Christ unto his father, and to be ac-
 “ cepted by God in and thorough Christ.” see
 Wade on Redemption of Time, c. ii. p. 17.
 “ this,” says he, “ is the way to honor Christ,
 “ considered as a *Priest*.”

C H A P. VIII.

On the day of judgment.

THE doctrine of a future judgment in general CHAP. VIII.
 or state of retribution to come, we have already shewn to be a principle of natural religion. in this general view therefore it falls not within the compass of our present design to enlarge upon it. nevertheless it is a doctrine, the usefulness, the dignity and the importance of which, interesting as it is in it's own immediate and intrinsic nature, have been greatly and in a very eminent manner illustrated and heightened by those peculiar discoveries relating to it, that are contained in the gospel of our Savior. to these peculiarities it is, that I propose in the present chapter intirely to confine myself. and on this account must we be obliged to omit many most obvious, awful and momentous considerations, that otherways it would be absolutely unpardonable in treating upon this subject, not to insist upon with the greatest seriousness and urgency of language. but, though I must, for this reason, wave the mention of them, the reader will, I hope, endeavor, for the sake of making the pro-
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per application of such a subject to the moral state and temper of his own mind, to be upon this occasion recollecting them. and, if the doctrine of a future judgment in general, and separately from those peculiar discoveries, that have been made in reference to it by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, be one of the most affecting, awful, awakening subjects, that can possibly be recommended to our attention; how much more affecting still, more awful and inexpressibly more awakening must it be in connexion with them! it may perhaps be thought, that, as this is a topic so immediately relative to the grand result and issue of things, and the general fate of the whole human race, of all that have lived upon this earth, from the creation of it to it's final dissolution, the distinct consideration of it would have been more properly deferred, till we had gone through the illustration of those other gospel-peculiarities, that have not as yet been insisted upon. but it was our original intention, before we passed on to any of these, to treat upon everie thing, that relates to the personal dignitie, character and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the glorious founder of our intire christian faith. and that signal authority, that high transcendent honor, with which he is to be invested, as the vice-gerent of heaven in the solemnities of public and universal judgment, is the only topic belonging to that part of our design, that remains to be considered. and it is for
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this reason I have been determined to enter upon the discussion of it here. and in doing it I shall pursue the following method.

First, I shall enumerate, and endeavor briefly to illustrate, all those discoveries relating to the doctrine of a future judgment, that are peculiar to the gospel.

Secondly, I shall point out the admirable ends and uses, which they are adapted to answer, distinctly and separately considered and independently of the moral force and energie of the doctrine in general. and with these I shall close my reflexions upon the subject.

First then, we are to enumerate, and briefly to illustrate all those discoveries relating to the doctrine of a future judgment, that are peculiar to the gospel. and that, which first offers itself to our reflexion, is,

That it is to be a public judgment. that everie individual of the human race will in a future state be judged, according to their merit, has been in everie age the doctrine of reason. but concerning any grand day, any particular, solemn season appointed for a public declaration of this judgment, for proclaiming in awful pomp, and before the assembled world itself, the impartial, deciding sentence of heaven, passed according to everie one's distinct, respective character, the utmost, that unassisted reason could have done, was only to conjecture. nor do I know, that it ever did even so

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much as that. but christianitie is clear and determinate upon the point. and it is to the gospel alone, that we are indebted for having any knowledge of it at all. "when the Son of man shall come in his glorie, then shall be gathered before him *all nations*;" are the exprefs words of our Savior himself. and to the very same purpose is the language of St. Paul, when addressing himself in so eloquent and sublime a manner to his Athenian audience. "God," he assures them, "has appointed a day," a great, a solemn day, "in the which he will judge *the world* in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained." a day, in which the whole world, the whole race of mankind is to appear in one collected bodie before the divine tribunal. and for this reason it is, that the grand solemnitie is not to commence, till the end of the world; because the persons then to appear before the bar of divine impartial public justice, are no other, than the intire bodie itself of all, who have ever dwelled in it. to think of one grand assemblie composed of the whole world itself, of all the generations of mankind, that have ever passed their days in it, is to have in our minds a most amazing idea indeed. but yet the thing itself is no way incredible. there is nothing in it, that contradicts any one principle or suggestion of reason whatsoever. and, if an earthly monarch can summon as many of his subjects as he pleases, to one general place of meeting or rendezvous appointed

pointed by himself for that purpose, shall we doubt, whether the “King of kings, and Lord of lords” can, by his authoritative and all-commanding voice, form the whole human race itself into one general and united assemblie? it must for certain be a thing infinitely easie to omnipotence, how much soever exceeding all that has been or ever can be done by any efforts of human power. and, if there are any great and important purposes to be answered by it in the moral government of the Deitie, the doctrine will then be so far from being incredible in itself, that the apparent proprietic, excellencie and usefulness of it will give additional credit to that religious scheme or system, in which it is contained, by increasing it’s internal evidence. but,

Secondly, all that the scripture relates concerning the person by whom the world is immediately to be judged, is likewise, and must be indeed of course, intirely peculiar to the gospel-revelation. who this person is, cannot be the least matter of doubt with any one, that is but ever so slightly versed in the evangelical records. it is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. he, who once appeared in the world under the character of it’s humble, meek and condescending Savior, is in the great day of public retribution to appear in amazing glorie and inexpressible splendor, as it’s judge. “we must all,” says the great apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, “stand before the judgment-
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“ seat of Christ ;” and again, in that to the Corinthians, “ we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” so likewise in a passage already referred to, it is declared by our blessed Lord in person, that, “ when the Son of man shall come in his glorie, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glorie ; and before *him* shall be gathered all nations : and he shall separate them the one from the other, as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left. and to those on his right hand, he shall say ; come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ; and to those on the left ; depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” it is true, that in other passages, and that very frequently, we find it asserted, that God, the supreme Deitie himself, will judge the world. but these seemingly different representations are perfectly consistent with each other. it is God, who appoints and determines a day of judgment. and it is he, the one, eternal Deitie, who gives authoritie and commission to the Lord Jesus Christ, to preside in the great transactions of it, as his representative and agent. without which divine commission and authoritie, great and glorious as he is in the consummate excellencies of his nature and merits of his character, he could not have the least claim to that dignitie, or power to assume it.

it. this distinction and subordinacy we find to be, on many occasions, very precisely and accurately insisted upon in the writings of the new testament. thus in a fore-cited passage; "he," that is, God, as appears by the preceding context, "has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world by Jesus Christ." so likewise says the same apostle, in one of his epistles; "in the day, when God shall judge the secrets of mens hearts, according to my gospel;" that is, according to the tenor of that faith, which I have preached, and the methods, that by it are prescribed for our obtaining the divine forgiveness and favor. and in maxims and sentiments like these, he has been fully authorised by the great founder and "finisher" of our christian faith, and his explicate declarations upon this head. "God," he says, "has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." "because" he condescended to take upon him all the sinless infirmities of human nature; therefore has the supreme being conferred upon him the dignitie of universal judge in his spiritual and moral kingdom; so far, at least, as relates to those subjects of it, that have inhabited this spot of earth. though, from some intimations, that have been given us in scripture upon this head, it should seem, that even the doom of fallen and apostate angels will likewise come within the sphere of his judicial character and office. "the angels, we are told, that kept not their first estate,

“ estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” these are the words of St. Jude. and the very same language and manner of expression we meet with in the second epistle of St. Peter. one thing however is certain from the passages that have been cited above ; that there is nothing in the doctrine of the scriptures relative to the final judgment of the world, that is in the least degree inconsistent with ought, that has by the light of nature been in reference to it reveled ; or, in particular, with the unrivaled supremacie and majestie of the “ one God and Father of all.” for, though Christ is the person, who is directly and immediately to preside in the solemnities of the future public judgment, yet, according to the express language and sentiment of the evangelical revelation, it is, we see, from this one supreme creator, governor and judge of men, that he has derived all the power and authoritie belonging to an office so transcendently venerable and august. but,

Thirdly, in order to heighten the grandeur and magnificence of this splendid, awful day, and to encrease the dignitie of these inexpressibly great and solemn transactions, they are to be immediately preceded, they are to be ushered in, by a general resurrection into an embodied state ; a resurrection of all, who have lived upon this earthly globe. this considered as it may any way affect our happiness

happiness in the heavenly and eternal world, is a distinct subject of reflexion, not to be entered upon at present, nor, till we have gone through the illustration of some other particulars, that are peculiar to the evangelical or gospel-system. we mention it here, only as one of those circumstances of grandeur and pomp, that are to attend the general, public judgment of all mankind at the end of the world. in this particular connexion it is mentioned by our Savior himself. “ Verily, verily, I say unto you,” such is his solemn language, “ verily, verily, I say unto you ; the hour is coming, and now is :” so very near is it, that we may even speak of it as being now actually present ; not to insist upon some specimens of it, that will at this instant period be given : “ the hour is coming and even now is, “ when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son “ of God, and they that hear shall live.” for, “ as the father hath life in himself, so hath he “ given to the Son to have life in himself ; and “ hath given him authoritie to execute judgment “ also, because he is the Son of man. marvel not “ at this ; for the hour is coming, in the which, “ all, that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, “ and shall come forth, they that have done good “ unto the resurrection of life, and they that have “ done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” in the same connexion it is introduced by his apostle St. Paul. and it is upon this account, that

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the resurrection, or existing anew in an embodied state, is so much and frequently insisted upon in the writings of the new testament. it is so peculiar a circumstance of glorie attending the final judgment, and has such a close, immediate connexion with it, that the mention of it may naturally denote or specify that very judgment itself. to speak of the resurrection of the bodie and of the judgment-day, is, in effect, to speak of one and the same subject. and, for this reason, I say, it is; and not on account of any necessitie, that there is of being embodied, in order to the existence or activitie of our conscious powers, that so great an emphasis is laid upon the resurrection in the style and language of the new testament. but,

Fourthly, another concomitant scene, by which the solemnities of the judgment-day will be rendered inexpressibly grand and awful; and, at which for the present we can only wonder and be astonished, without being able to form any tolerably sufficient or adequate conceptions of it; is the conflagration of the whole habitable world itself, and the absolute dissolution of it in flames of fire. this is what St. Paul refers to, when he says in one of his epistles to the Thessalonians; that “ the
 “ Lord Jesus shall be reveled from heaven in flam-
 “ ing fire, taking vengeance on them, who know
 “ not God, and who obey not the gospel of our
 “ Lord Jesus Christ.” and in the very same point of view is this general conflagration and dissolution

solution of the world insisted upon by St. Peter. “ but the day of the Lord will come,” on account of it’s suddeness, “ as a thief in the night, in the “ which the heavens shall pass away with a great “ noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent “ heat: the earth also and all that therein is shall “ be burned up. seeing then that all these things “ are to be dissolved, what manner of persons “ ought *we* to be in all holy conversation and god- “ liness, looking for and hastening to,” in *our* speedie preparation for it, and the right ordering of *our* affections towards it, “ the coming of the day “ of God, wherein the elements shall melt with “ fervent heat?” that the world should perish by fire, was indeed a very ancient opinion among the heathen sages, and not a little prevalent throughout the several æras of the pagan philosophie. but it was an opinion as embraced by them, founded at best upon probable conjecture only. for our knowledge of it’s truth and certaintie we are wholly indebted to the gospel. besides, they could not have connected it, as is done in scripture, with the day of judgment; that day itself not appearing to have been by them at all thought of or apprehended. but there are yet, in the

Fifth place, some other circumstances of grandeur and solemnitie to accompanie the transactions of the judgment-day, and which are, in the general comprized in such expressions as these. “ when “ the Son of man shall come in his own glorie, in

“ the glorie of his father, and the glorie of his
 “ holy angels, with a shout and with the trump
 “ of God, then shall he be seated upon a throne
 “ of glorie.” by his “ own glorie” we are, I
 suppose, to understand that splendid, glorious bo-
 die, with which he is in the heavenly world invest-
 ed; which, though it be not consequently in itself
 a circumstance peculiar to the day of judgment;
 yet this is what may justly be said of it’s visibilitie
 to human sight. for “ the heavens, we are told,
 “ must receive him, till the restitution of all
 “ things.” so that, till then, never will he ap-
 pear to human eye thus gloriously arrayed. but
 to this will be added “ the glorie of his father;”
 which perhaps we may, with the greatest probabi-
 litie, interpret of some peculiar additional dis-
 plays of magnificence and pomp, which shall sig-
 nifie to the newly risen world, in the most illustrious
 and evident manner, that he is the representative
 and commissioner of God. and, to heighten the
 whole, it is still farther added, that he will “ come
 “ in the glorie of his holy angels;” that is, surround-
 ed with an innumerable companie of this heavenly
 host, as his officers and attendants. such are the cir-
 cumstances of the solemnitie and grandeur with which
 we are in the scripture assured, that the second com-
 ing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the day of general
 and public appearance before his awful throne of
 judgment, will be attended. and, tho’ we must be
 far at present from being able to form any just or
 accurate

accurate idea of them in particular, yet this, in general, we must needs conclude, that they will render the whole scene amazingly grand. so, that the most august assemblie, that ever was held, the most awful proceedings, that were ever carried on, upon this earth below, must, in comparison with it, sink into mere emptiness and absolute vanitie. add to all, that the time or season of this grand event is absolutely uncertain. so we have it plainly enough affirmed in those words of St. Peter, that have been cited above, and yet more explicitly by our Savior, in that eminently remarkable declaration, “ of that day and that hour, knoweth no man, no not the angels, which are in heaven, neither the Son,” who is himself to preside in the great transactions of it, “ but the father.” but let us now procede, in the

Second place, to point out those admirable ends and uses, which these peculiar discoveries of the gospel relating to a future judgment are adapted to answer, independently of the moral force and energie of that doctrine in general. and what I would, in the

First place, observe under this head is, that the designation of our Savior to the office of presiding in the grand solemnities and transactions of the judgment-day, is to be considered, according to the expresse doctrine of scripture, as a very eminent and conspicuous part of that reward and honor, which have been conferred upon him, on account of the

the spotless virtue of his life and his obedience even "unto death." and in this view of it, it is to be looked upon as corroborative of that general argument, which we have already drawn from his exaltation at the right hand of the father, in proof of those heavenly and everlasting blessings, which we likewise, through the infinite mercies of our God, may expect to share in, according to the degree of resemblance, in the temper and disposition of our own minds, to those virtues, which formed in him a character so highly acceptable and well-pleasing in the sight of God. such is the animating conclusion, which the gospel teaches us to draw from our Savior's exaltation in general, and which must consequently be deducible from this particular instance of it. but,

Secondly, this day of public judgment and general appearance before the supremely august and venerable tribunal of heaven will contribute in the highest degree to the honor of the virtuous, and to the shame and ignominie of the vitious. and on both these accounts it is a day, by the great transactions of which the divine perfections will be in a very eminent manner displayed. what a noble reward is it esteemed? how great an accession of honor and renown, for any one, on account of his virtue and integritie, to be distinguished by the special and immediate notice of his prince; and to have it known among his fellow-subjects by some external, public badge or ensign of honor, that he

is in the number of his favorites? but what are present honors, whether of this or any differing kind, could they, with all their united lustre adorn the names of some one individual, when compared with that of having our worth and virtue proclaimed before the assembled world and an innumerable company of the heavenly, angelic hierarchie; and this in the most solemn manner, and under the clearest and most indisputable, the most splendid and magnificent sanctions of divine authority? how honorable to everie one, whose happier lot it shall be, to be in such a manner, and in such an assemblie distinguished as a person, whom God approves, whose character he beholds with complacencie, and, whose persevering integrity has been already rewarded with the felicities of his heavenly kingdom? how complete will be the triumphs of the good and virtuous in having their names thus publicly recognized, and with such grand, distinguishing circumstances of honor recorded in the volumes of eternitie? what a full, abundant recompence will it be for all the scorn and insolence, the malignitie and vile reproach, with which they may have been treated here! and, on the other hand, can we think, that it will not be a circumstance of the deepest shame, of the most acute and pungent miserie to the wicked and ungodly to have their sins proclaimed in the face of an assembled world, to have it thus publicly declared, that for these sins they have been long ago
doomed

doomed to the pains and wretchedness of hell, and to hear the judge commissioning his attending angels to drive them back again to that place of torment ! and in these proceedings of the grand solemnity how eminently will the divine perfections be displayed ! how signally will it be made known to all men, that the sovereign ruler of the world is “ a righteous Lord, “ who loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity, “ who is the liberal rewarder of those, that diligently seek him, who cannot be mocked ;” and who will not fail to assert the honor and majesty of his government, and the sacred, inviolable reverence due to his laws by the severe, impartial punishment of those, who obstinately infringe and transgress them ? with what loud hosannas, with what exalted songs of praise will the assembled world, together with the attending angels, join in one grand and joyful chorus, saying ; “ great and “ marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty : “ just and true are all thy ways, o thou king of “ saints. who shall not fear thee, o Lord, and “ glorify thy name ; for thou only art holy. for “ all nations shall come and worship before thee ; “ for thy judgments are *made manifest* !” and from these several observations it appears, that it is no objection to the design of this great day, or to the ends, that were intended to be answered by the appointment of it, that so great a number of those, who are then to “ stand before the judgment-seat “ of Christ,” have long before been enjoying the happiness

happinefs of the future world, and others groaning under the pains and miseries of it. the scripture teaches this doctrine of a public judgment, not exclusively of that, which relates to everie individual in his separate character, but additionally to it. nor is it so much decisive of mens fate, as in that respect declarative. it is not the design of this solemn day to determine upon human worth and merit, but publicly to notifie the honor, that has been already done to it in the moral government of the supreme deitie, and that will still be conferred upon it throughout the endless ages of eternitie. and, "it is certainly,"---to use the words of the great and excellent archbishop Leighton, in his exposition on the Creed, "most congruous that
" this be done not only in each particular a-part,
" but most conspicuously in all together, that the
" justice and mercy of God, may not only be accomplished, but acknowledged and magnified, and
" that not only severally in the several persons
" of men and angels, but universally, jointly and
" manifestly in the view of all, as upon one
" theatre, angels and men being at once, some of
" them the objects of that justice, others of mercy,
" but all of them spectators of both." Select Works, p. 253. and in farther illustration of this particular we may here properly advert to the reasoning of a very candid writer, in his *remarks on the Bishop of London's Discourses*, p. 80, 81. "natural death, says he, seems to be the separating

On the day of judgment.

“ of the immortal spirit and sensitive soul from the
“ bodie laid in the grave ; while the sensitive soul
“ accompanying the rational and immortal spirit,
“ may be formed for the sufferings or ease of the
“ intermediate state according as man’s behavior
“ has been in this present life, and that, for a far-
“ ther state of trial, for the greater exaltation of
“ the truly righteous, and for the recovery in some
“ degree of those sinners, who have wickedly died
“ in a state of impenitencie in this present life ;
“ for the passage in scripture, which declares, that
“ every one shall receive the things done in the
“ *bodie* no more excludes our conduct in the inter-
“ mediate state of Hades, than if it had been said,
“ everie one shall receive the things done in his
“ *youth*, would have excluded his being judged
“ for the conduct of his riper years.” and indeed
this is the very language of Solomon upon the sub-
ject, though the author did not perhaps recollect
it, doubtless without any thought of such an ex-
clusion, in that well-known and awakening ex-
postulation ; “ rejoice, o young man, in thy youth ;
“ and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy
“ youth, but know thou, that for all *these* things
“ God will bring thee to judgment.” “ and if,”
as this sensible and candid writer goes on, “ we
“ are rewarded and punished according to the
“ whole of our moral conduct, both here and in
“ Hades, it will be literally true, that everie one
“ will receive the things done in his bodie, or in
“ this

“ this state of things, since our behavior here, as
“ well as in Hades, will increase our reward or
“ heighten our punishment.” but,

Thirdly, the doctrine of a public judgment is peculiarly well adapted for heightening the absurditie and vanitie of all hypocritical pretences, whether to religion or to the virtues of social life. it is with no small complacencie, that plausible and specious sinners contemplate their own dexteritie in imposing upon the rest of the world, and passing themselves upon mankind for what indeed they are not. and they are apt to think, that they “ have “ their reward ;” that they have gained the point they aimed at ; which is to be really vile and contemptible, but yet appear in the eye of the world honorable and glorious. but in the doctrine of a public judgment we see, that this is by no means to be depended upon. they may conceal their real character for a while ; but should this appointed day overtake them suddenly, and repentance not intervene, God himself will detect their hypocrisie, and expose them to “ open shame,” both to their fellow-creatures of mankind, and in the presence of those angelic beings, who, in this grand solemnitie, will surround the throne of judgment. and the more such specious pretenders have valued themselves upon the success of their hypocrisie, the greater must be their torment and vexation, when they find it brought to light in a manner so peculiarly calculated to mortifie their pride,

and to bring upon them the scorn and derision not only of their fellow-men, but even of such an innumerable multitude of the glorious, angelic host. "but of all men," says the fore-mentioned good archbishop, and in the work just now cited, p. 257. "sure the hypocrite likes least the mention and remembrance of that day; there is no room for disguises there; all masks must off, and all things appear just, as they are;" and that is the worst news to him, that can be." and this I apprehend to be the very thing meant by the apostle, in saying, that, "when the Lord shall come, he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart." to the supreme Being nothing can be "brought to light," or "made manifest." all things have been by him most intimately and exactly known from eternitie. the "bringing to light" therefore "the hidden things of darkness," and "making *manifest* the counsels of the heart," which is here spoken of and ascribed by the apostle to the transactions of the judgment-day, must necessarily denote the discoverie of mens real characters to one another; and that in the presence of attending angels, the appointed witnesses both of their hypocrisie and their shame. it is to this purpose, that I find Mr. Baxter expressing himself in his Sermon on judgment. See his Works, Vol. IV. p. 770. "God's judgment," he there observes, "is not intended for any discovery to
" himself

“ himself of what he knows not already. he
“ knows already what all men are, and what they
“ have done, and what is their due. but it is to
“ discover to others and to men themselves, the
“ ground of his sentence, that so his judgment
“ may attain it's end; for the glorifying his grace
“ on the righteous, and for the convincing the
“ wicked of their sin and desert; and to shew to
“ all the world the righteousness of the judge, and
“ of his sentence and execution. Rom. iii. 4, 26.
“ and Rom. ii. 2. it is not a controverſie there-
“ fore undecided in the mind of God, that is there
“ to be decided, but only one that is undecided as
“ to the knowlege and mind of creatures.”

Fourthly, it is very remarkable, that all the discoveries relating to a future judgment, that are peculiar to the gospel, are so many concurring circumstances of the highest grandeur, solemnity and magnificence, that the human imagination can any way conceive of. now there is a disposition natural to mankind, by which we are inclined to take a pleasure and delight in conversing with and contemplating such magnificent and splendid scenes. these several circumstances then being in the scripture representation connected with the doctrine of a future judgment or state of rewards and retribution to come, have a natural tendency to fix our attention more pleasingly, more frequently, and consequently with greater utility, upon that doctrine in general. it is a doctrine, that cannot be

too often made the subject of our most serious meditations. if therefore these peculiar discoveries of the gospel are by the special nature of them adapted for engaging our attention to it, they must needs be considered as very happily conducing in their tendencie and design to all the grand and ultimate purposes of religion. and can we indeed without the deepest astonishment reflect upon that admirable wisdom of the divine providence, by which so many circumstances of the highest possible dignitie and pomp have been made to centre in the solemnities and transactions of the judgment-day? how glorious will be our judge both in the dignitie of his person and the splendors of his appearance! the only-begotten of the father! the most expressive brightness of his glorie! surrounded with *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands* of the angelic host forming his retinue and singing a "new song," "saying, worthie is the "lamb, that was slain to receive power and "riches and honor and glorie and blessing!" what a wonderful assemblie must be that, which is to consist of the whole human race! with what an endless varietie of objects, sights and characters will it present us! with what pleasing astonishment shall we see the numberless dead awakened by the voice of the arch-angel's trumpet, and instantly assuming a glorious, spiritual and incorruptible bodie! with what fixed attention; with what eager and almost insatiable curiositie shall we contemplate it's exquisite

site construction, and all the attractive beauties of it's lovely form! at the same time to see the heavens melting into one continued stream and boundless ocean of liquid fire! mountains tottering! the sea itself in flames! all nature shaking to her inmost center; and all that has been thought most permanent and stable upon this terrestrial globe, crackling into ruins like a broken potsherd! can we think of being the innocent and happie spectators in a scene like this, and not be looking with indifference upon all worldly grandeur, upon all, that has been called magnificence here on earth? must we not consider it, as being, in comparison, infinitely beneath even those toys and vanities, that were the delight of our tenderest infancie? such then has been the labor, and as it were the mightie effort of divine providence, to render the thought of futuritie in the highest degree solemn and affecting, and to give it an influence sovereignly efficacious upon the heart. and shall we any longer resist these labors of divine love? shall providence operate thus wisely, thus admirably, thus powerfully in our behalf, and for the advancement of our immortal felicitie, and we remain, nevertheless, insensible and unimpressed, lifeless and unalarmed? nor is the contrivance of heaven less admirable in that single circumstance relative to these grand proceedings, that is unknown, than in those that have been reveled. and the absolute uncertaintie of the time, when this amazing scene is to commence, is
what

what renders it alike interesting and awful, with respect to every individual of our species in each succeeding age and period of the world. Shall we not then, as "the conclusion of the whole matter," instantly resolve, that by the habitual "fear of God and keeping of his commandments" we will henceforth be living in a daily preparation for that interesting, awful period, so soon to arrive; when "he will bring everie work into judgment, "with everie secret thing, whether it be good, or "whether it be evil?"

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

B O O K

B O O K III.

C H A P. I.

On the personalitie of the Holy Spirit.

IN the historie of the acts of the apostles we ^{CHAP. I.} have the following circumstance recorded concerning St. Paul ; that, “ whilst Apollos was
 “ at Corinth, this apostle having passed through
 “ the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and, finding
 “ certain disciples, he said unto them, have ye re-
 “ ceived the Holie Ghost, since ye believed ? and
 “ they said unto him, we have not so much as
 “ heard, whether there be any Holie Ghost.”
 and the conference which, upon this occasion, passed between St. Paul and these Ephesian disciples, the narrative of which we have in what follows to the seventh verse of the chapter referred to, is fully decisive in favor of that catholic and candid spirit, which ought to be subsisting among all professing
 X x christians,

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christians, whatever may be their diversitie of opinion concerning this or that particular doctrine of the gospel. on more accounts than one, it is a narrative remarkably clear and determinate upon this article. and in the conduct, not only of the Ephesian converts particularly here spoken of, but of the other members likewise of the Ephesian church, as well as of the apostle himself, with respect to two distinct particulars of the christian faith, namely, the doctrine of the Holie Spirit and the baptismal rite or institution, both of them strictly peculiar to the gospel, we may observe this candid and catholic spirit, this spirit of forbearance, love and cordial union, displaying itself in the most amiable colors, and exerted in all it's highest energie and strength. and this is still more deserving of our attention, as upon each of these points very warm and angry debates have been long subsisting among ourselves. but that which by the subject now before us we are led more particularly to instance in is the doctrine of the Holie Spirit. so far were the christian proselytes mentioned in this narrative from believing either the divinitie or even the personalitie of the Holie Ghost, that they had not so much as heard, whether there were any such being existing or not. "we have not," they tell the apostle very "frankly, so much as heard, whether there be "any Holie Ghost." what then had been the conduct of their brethren in the church of Ephesus towards them? had they, in consequence of some

I

slight

slight suspicions upon this head, been artfully prying into their sentiments? or upon discovering their ignorance upon the topic, did they hereticate and anathematise them? did they exclude them from their communion? did they pronounce them to be in a state of damnation? nothing of this kind appears. on the contrarie, they are spoken of by the sacred historian under the very same names and appellations, that are commonly made use of throughout the evangelical writings in characterising or denominating the true and genuin professors of the gospel. they are called "disciples:" they are said to be "believers." and when St. Paul himself was from their own mouths informed of this very singular case, without the least harshness or severity of language, without the least intimation of their being on account of their ignorance in this particular unworthie the name or communion of christians, or disqualified for the favor of God, he "instructs them in the spirit of meekness," and gives them his advice; which they likewise in the spirit of candor and humble docilitie immediately complie with. such is the primitive and apostolic manner of proceeding. but how different, alas, the spirit, that has since shewn itself in the christian world, on account of that diversitie of opinion, which has arisen in it in relation to this very article of our christian faith! and how strangely was Lord Nottingham mistaken in his notions of christianitie, when speaking upon this very subject con-

cerning some, whom he calls Anabaptists, he supposed them to be "so good christians, as not to receive," that *good christian* Mr. Whiston "into their communion!" see his Answer to Mr. Whiston, p. 65. so that with his Lordship's leave, and upon the model exhibited in the character of these primitive converts, of the sacred historian, and even of the apostle himself, we shall now venture upon the freest discussion of that very question, of which this memorable passage so directly reminds us, "whether there be" indeed "any Holie Ghost," any really distinct and conscious agent characterised to us in the scriptures under that appellation; without fear of incurring either the displeasure of heaven or the deserved censure of any of our fellow-christians, which ever way we may finally decide upon it? considering indeed the previous interrogatorie of the apostle, "have ye received the Holie Ghost, since ye believed?" this whole passage may be thought to refer only to those miraculous gifts, which were in these primitive times communicated. but, though this be indeed the reference of the apostle's interrogatorie, yet it could never be the intention of these Ephesian converts in their reple to affirm, that they had never heard of these miraculous gifts themselves, of which it is scarce possible, that they should not have heard. but what they affirm is, that they had never heard any thing about "the Holie Ghost." consequently they did not understand the apostle as refering

referring under these terms to any such gifts, and equally unable were they to affix any other ideas to them. their answer implies a total ignorance of everie thing relative to this peculiar article. the application therefore, which we have made of this historical passage, and the observations we have founded upon it, must remain equally pertinent and just. from this manner of expression too made use of by the apostle, something may perhaps be infered in relation to the general topic, which we have proposed in the present chapter to discuss. for it is natural to ask, why the miraculous powers conferred by the laying on of the hands of the apostles should be denoted by these peculiar terms, or what reason is to be given for such an application of them? and perhaps it will not be easie to assign any other, than the derivation of these gifts from a being or person so denominated. St. Paul speaks of some that were “in *Christ*,” i. e. in the profession of christianitie “before him.” again he says, “if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature;” and again, “in *Christ Jesus*;” that is, under the dispensation of the gospel, “neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.” in which several passages, the christian institution or gospel-system itself is signified and expressed by the name of it’s author. and such a phraseologie is easily accounted for by such an intended reference to Jesus Christ, as the founder of it. in like manner,

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ner, what could the apostles mean, when they denoted the gifts they conferred by styling them "the Holie Ghost," but to refer our thoughts to some personal agent, from whom they themselves had received the power of communicating them? thus we denote a collection or volume of writings by the name of Plato, but who would have thought of doing this if no such person as Plato had ever existed; to whom by this appellation we impute them? Philalethes Londinensis therefore had no occasion for the following cautionarie remark, as we find it occurring in his very ingenious Essay towards a Demonstration of the Scripture-Trinity, Proposit. iv. p. 56. 2d Edit. "perhaps
" several of the texts I have brought in proof of
" the personalitie of the Spirit, may be referred by
" some of my readers to his extraordinarie gifts:
" those texts to be sure must be taken off from
" the evidence by such readers, who must impar-
" tially weigh the remaining proof." for to style them *his* gifts is surely the very language implying personalitie. or for what reason, let it once again be asked, can we imagine those miraculous powers, with which the apostles and others among the first profelytes to christianitie were indued, to have been signified by the terms Holie Spirit, if not in reference to the agencie of a being or person so denominated in the communication and bestowment of them? so that this kind of phraseologie, far from militating against the personalitie of the Spirit,
does

does indeed afford no slight or inconsiderable argument in favor of it. but we have proposed an ampler discussion of this subject. and in order to that, it is to be observed, that in the sacred scriptures the word Spirit is used in a great varietie of significations. as are likewise the terms, Holie Spirit, and the Spirit of God. with respect to the former of these observations, or the meaning of those single expressions, spirit, the spirit, and a spirit, it is evident, that these terms are sometimes made use of to denote the mind of man in general. “there is a *spirit* in man, and the inspiration of “the Almighty hath given him understanding;” says Elihu in the book of Job: “for what man,” in the language of the apostle, “knoweth the “things of a man, save the spirit of man, which “is in him?” the most intimate knowlege, that is to say, the verie conscioufness itself of a man’s actions, must necessarily reside in everie man’s own mind. once more the apostle prays for the Thesalonian christians, “that God would blefs them “in bodie, soul and spirit;” or, as his meaning undoubtedly was, with reference to external or bodily accommodations, to the sensitive and animal life, and to the conscious, intellectual part or mind. at other times the same word is used to denote, not the mind itself in general, but the moral temper of it, whether good or bad. thus we read of the “*spirit* of meekness,” and of “a perverse *spirit*;” and of “the spirit of Christ,” that is a confor-
mitie

mitie in temper and disposition to the example of Christ. “newness of spirit” is a phrase intended to signifie new affections or inclinations of mind. and many other expressions of the like form we meet with in the sacred writings. and it is in this sense perhaps that we are to understand that passage of St. Luke; “if ye then being evil know how to give
 “good gifts unto your children, how much more
 “shall your heavenly father give the holie spirit or
 “an holie spirit to them, who ask him?” and in the same sense we may understand that apostolical exhortation; “grieve not the holie spirit of God;
 “whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” that is, act not in contradiction to those pious inclinations, those virtuous and good affections, which you have received from that God, “from whom cometh everie good and perfect gift,” by which you are formed into the resemblance of his image, which so long as you cultivate them, will be your sure and certain ground of hope in the divine mercie, affording you the most pleasing and delightful prospects with respect to the heavenly and immortal felicitie; and which you cannot contradict without causing great disturbance and grief in your own minds, the virtuous principle bemoaning itself, as it were, when curbed, and it’s generous motions repulsed. in this sense the words, “Holie Ghost,” are evidently used by St. Paul, when thus addressing the Corinthians;
 “giving no offence in any thing, that the ministrie
 “be

“ be not blamed ; but in all things approving our-
“ selves as the ministers of God, in much patience,
“ in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in
“ stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors,
“ in watchings, in fastings ; by pureness, by know-
“ lege, by long suffering, by kindness, by *the holie*
“ *ghost*,” or by a truly sanctified and holie tem-
per, “ by the word of truth, by the power of
“ God, by the armor of righteousness, on the right
“ hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by
“ evil report and good report.” and there is a very
animated passage in the apologetic of Tertullian,
where it seems to be used in the same sense. ei
(scil. Deo) offero opimam & majorem hostiam,
quam ipse mandavit, orationem de carne pudica, de
anima innocenti, de *spiritu sancto* profectam ; non
grana thura unius assis, non arabicæ arboris lachry-
mas, nec duas meri guttas, nec sanguinem reprob-
i bovis mori optantis, & post omnia inquinamenta,
etiam conscientiam spurcam, ut mirer, cum hostiæ
probantur penes vos a vitiosissimis sacerdotibus, cur
præcordia potius victimarum, quam ipsorum sacri-
ficantium examinantur. Apologet. c. xxx. and in
the prophesie of Isaiah, the moral excellencies of
the divine nature are expressed by these very terms.
“ they rebelled,” it is said in the sixtie-third
chapter of that prophesie, and the tenth verse,
“ and vexed his holie Spirit.” their conduct, on
account of the absolute perfection of his own na-
ture, was so highly displeasing to the Deitie, that

On the personalitie of the Holie Spirit.

were it possible his happiness should be disturbed at all, such conduct in his creatures would, beyond any thing whatever, be most likely to have that effect. and, as in the old testament the supreme Being, on account of the spotless perfection of his moral attributes, is called by way of appropriation or peculiar emphasis, "*the* holie one," so likewise he is for the same reason called, in the scriptures of the new, "*the* holie spirit." this is evidently the meaning of the expression, when St. Peter says to Ananias ; " why has Satan filled thine heart, to lie " unto the Holie Ghost," or Spirit. in the very next verse St. Peter himself, speaking of this very lie, calls it " lying unto God ;" under the eye and in the presence of the one, supreme and everlasting Deitie, spoken of in this preceding verse, under the appellation or title of the Holie Ghost or Spirit, on account of the absolute perfection and puritie of his moral character. and this is what I suppose to be the meaning of our blessed Savior, when he speaks of " blaspheming against the Holie Ghost," or Spirit, as being a much greater crime than blaspheming himself. " blaspheming against the Holie Ghost," is blaspheming the one, sovereign Deitie, here called *the* " Holie Ghost" or Spirit, by way of appropriation, in the same sense, in which he is said to be " the only wise, the only " potentate," and " only to have immortalitie," he alone possessing these several attributes of holiness, power, wisdom and immortalitie, essentially, unoriginately,

unoriginately, independently and in the highest possible plenitude and perfection of them. the like diversitie of meaning is observable in that other phrase or expression, "the Spirit of God." it is used as descriptive of God himself. "the Spirit of God," it is said in the book of Genesis, "moved upon the face of the waters;" that is, the divine Spirit, or God himself, exerted his power upon the liquid element. thus likewise it is said by Elihu in Job; "the Spirit of God hath made me," with the intention undoubtedly of expressing this sentiment; the divine Spirit, Deitie himself is my creator. at other times this phrase denotes the image of the divine perfections impressed upon our minds. "but ye," says St. Paul, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be, *the spirit of God* dwells in you." what in this last expression could he mean to say, but this; if ye be indeed in the temper and prevailing disposition of your minds possessed of a divine likeness? "the Spirit," says St. Peter, "the Spirit of glorie and of God resteth upon you." which was in other words to say; you have attained to some glorious degrees of resemblance to the character and perfections of the soveraign Deitie himself.

At other times however all these expressions are made use of in the sacred scriptures to denominate or denote another person or conscious agent, altogether as distinct in his personalitie from the supreme Deitie, as from any of us. to such a distinct,

individual being so called we find in the scriptures all sorts of personal characters and properties to be ascribed. so that it should seem his personalitie, his strict and proper personalitie, cannot be denied without subverting the sense and destroying the use of the plainest and most determinate language. and what certaintie could there be in the historie either of former or of present times, if the real personages, whose character and actions it records, might by dint of criticism be reduced into mere figures of speech, attributes of being or modes of relation? St. Paul, when speaking of "the Spirit," in such a manner as necessarily to distinguish him from the supreme Spirit, or sovereign Deitie, ascribes to him "a mind." "he," saith he, "who searcheth the heart;" he, whom we know to be so exactly and intimately acquainted with the heart of man; that is, the supreme, omniscient Deitie, "knoweth also," and with equal exactness, "what is the mind of the Spirit." now, when we speak of "the mind of man," who ever doubts, whether or no, we are speaking concerning a real person, or conscious being? must we not then necessarily understand in the same sense, "the mind of the Spirit?" to what other being, but a conscious being, can mind belong? or what force or pertinencie shall we be able to discern in the reasoning here made use of by the apostle; what analogie or correspondence between the different parts of it, if by "the Spirit," we are not here to

to understand some conscious being alike distinct both from the human agent or person, and from the sovereign Spirit himself? exclusively of this interpretation, we must either suppose the apostle in this passage to have affirmed nothing more, than, that he, who knoweth the heart of man, knoweth the heart of man; or else we must consider him as asserting, that the supreme being is perfectly well acquainted with his own intentions and views. and can we imagine either of these to have been the sentiment intended? yet, I presume, that no interpretation whatever can be given of the passage, which will not necessarily terminate in one or other of these propositions, that only excepted, which has been already assigned. willing likewise or volition, choice or election are properties, that can only be imputed to some personal conscious being. and they are in scripture expressly attributed to the Spirit. “dividing,” says the apostle, speaking of the Spirit and of the miraculous powers, that were derived from his influence and agencie, “dividing “to everie man severally as he *will*.” “all these “likewise,” says the apostle, in the same verse, “*worketh* that one and the same Spirit.” and in a verse or two preceding he had expressed himself thus. “to one is *given* by the Spirit the word of “wisdom, to another the word of knowlege by the “same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit;” and so on. “the Spirit” is elsewhere said “to “make intercession for us with groanings, that

“cannot

“ cannot be uttered ;” with such importunate solicitations, the earnestness and fervor of which, no human tongue can express. he is said to “ search “ the deep things of God.” it is said of him, that he should “ guide the apostles into all truth ;” that “ he should not speak of himself, but that “ whatsoever he should hear, that he should “ speak ;” “ to be sent by the Son ; and to come “ forth from the father ;” that is, to have received his commission for acting the part he is engaged in relative to the gospel-dispensation ultimately from him ; to have received “ the things, that were “ Christ’s, and to shew them to the disciples.” what can such language mean ? what can “ giving “ and working,” “ interceding, searching and in- “ quiring into things,” receiving a commission to act a certain part in the ministration of evangelical grace, “ hearing and speaking and shewing ;” what, I say, can such language implicate ; if not the personal existence or conscious agency of the being to whom these things are severally ascribed ? our Savior assures his disciples, that upon his own departure from them, “ he would pray the father, “ and he would give them *another* comforter, “ that might abide with them for ever, even the “ Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, “ because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ;” whom mankind in general are not so likely to recognize or be apprehensive of on account of his not appearing to the world, as the Lord Jesus Christ

Christ himself did, in any visible form or shape, but only by means of those miraculous gifts, which by him were communicated, and of which the apostles themselves were so intimately conscious, as our Savior in the following words affirms; “but ye know him,” or at least will very soon be acquainted with him, “for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” is not the personalitie of the Holie Spirit, as much implied in the language of this promise, as even that of our Savior himself? or do *I* and *another* not indeed mean two? would the phraseologie however of the passage admit of any different interpretation, yet were we to suppose our Savior here to speak of the miraculous gifts themselves, and not of the being or person, who was to communicate them, it would not be true in fact, that the “world did not see or know them;” since even the very enemies of christianitie could not but discern them in their visible operation and effects, though it was only by a belief of the gospel, that they could be led to acknowledge that invisible agent here spoken of as the author of them.

But there is another topic of argument here to be insisted upon, and which I cannot but think decisive upon the point. and that is the repeted mention, that is made in the new testament of the Holie Spirit in such connexion with other personal or conscious beings, as seems to implice with equal certaintie both his personalitie and theirs. thus,
for

for instance, runs the language of our Savior's last and most solemn commission given to his apostles ;
 " go ye and teach all nations, baptising them in
 " the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the
 " Holie Ghost." upon which, says Mr. Hervey very justly, " it is evident, I believe, it is allowed
 " by all, that the two first are real distinct persons.
 " and is there not equal reason to conclude, that
 " the last mentioned is a person also? suppose you
 " should *endeavor* to distinguish three persons in
 " your discourse, what other language would you
 " use than this?" See his Letters, Vol. I. Letter
 XXI. p. 91. to the same purpose is that apostolical benediction ; " the grace of our Lord Jesus
 " Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of
 " the Holie Spirit, be with you all ; amen."
 " through *him*," that is, Christ, says the apostle in
 his epistle to the Ephesians, " we both have ac-
 " cess," meaning Jews and Gentiles alike, " by
 " *one* spirit unto the father." in like manner St.
 Peter, when speaking in the begining of his first
 epistle of the christian election, or bestowment of
 gospel-privileges, expressly represents it as being
 " according to the fore-knowlege of God, the *fa-*
 " *ther*, through the sanctification of the *Spirit*
 " unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood
 " of *Jesus Christ*." " there are," says St. Paul,
 adhering with the greatest possible exactness to the
 same distinction or mode of enumeration, " diver-
 " sities of gifts, but the same *Spirit*. and there are
 " diversities

“ diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord,”
 that is Christ. “ and there are diversities of ope-
 “ rations, but it is the same *God*, who worketh all
 “ in all.” to which we may probably add in the
 same view that passage occurring in his epistle to
 Titus; “ but after that the kindness and love of
 “ *God* our Savior towards man appeared, not by
 “ works of righteousness, which we have done,
 “ but according to his own mercie he saved us by
 “ the washing of regeneration and renewing of
 “ the *Holie Ghost*; which he shed on us abun-
 “ dantly through *Jesus Christ* our Savior.” Enje-
 dinus at least has alleged it as parallel to the words
 of our Savior in the institution of baptism already
 insisted upon. adding, *ubi & baptismi & trium il-*
lorum fit mentio. and immediately subjoining that
 just now cited from the Ephesians, as similar like-
 wise in the sense of it, he procedes thus. *quibus*
in locis trium quidem fit mentio, sed non idem
officium omnibus tribuitur. nam fons & origo sta-
tuitur Deus pater, instrumenta autem & media,
Jesus & spiritus sanctus. Pater enim est, qui con-
 donat peccata, 2 Cor. 5. id fit per filium, seu in
 filio; cujus testimonium, & quasi figillum, est spi-
 ritus sanctus, in quo clamamus, Abba, pater. vid.
 Enjedini Explicat. de Trinitate, p. 114, 5. and
 scarcely, I think, can we imagin St. Paul not to be
 speaking of a real person under the name of “ the
 “ Spirit,” when he thus addresses the believing
 Romans; “ now, I beseech you, brethren, for the

Z z

“ Lord

“ Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the *love* of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” once more, in one of the visions of the Revelation, “ the spirit and the bride say, come.” by “ the bride” we are undoubtedly to understand even a prodigious number of real persons; no less a number than the whole collective bodie of pious christians, that have ever lived in any part of the world. and it would be strange indeed, if the word, Spirit, in this connexion, did not at least denote a single one. or how can we avoid concluding, that in all these passages, “ the Spirit, or the Holie Ghost,” must have been as much designed for the nomination of a real person, as any of the other personal appellations that occur in them? when we read in the evangelical historie, that our Savior took Peter, James, and John, “ and led them into an high mountain apart by themselves,” can we suppose that it will ever be disputed, whether the name Peter, was not as much designed to signifie a person, as that of James, or that of James, as much as Peter, and that of John as much as either? in a word, to adopt here, and with it to enforce our present argument, a remark of the very ingenious and able writer just now refered to, as it occurs in his Essay towards a Demonstration of the Scripture-Trinity, Proposit. v. p. 56. it would be somewhat peculiarly strange and unaccountable, if that being, or power, which is so often styled in scripture,

scripture, by way of emphasis, "the Spirit," should nevertheless be no Spirit at all or real person. thus much however is certain, that some of the earliest among the christian writers have in the clearest manner expressed the contrarie sentiment. who for instance can doubt of Justin Martyr's belief in the true and proper personalitie of the Spirit, whom we find in his Dialogue with Trypho, p. 211. and when commenting upon the twenty-fourth psalm, which he considers as a prophesie of our Savior's ascension, to have expressed himself as follows? in the prophetic exhibition he supposes some of the heavenly hierarchie, upon receiving orders to open the celestial gates to the ascending Savior under the character of "the king of glorie," to ask, "who is this king of glorie?" upon which says he, "the Holie Ghost" (το πνευμα το ἅγιον) replies, "either in his own person, or in the person of the father; ἢ ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆ πατρὸς, ἢ ἀπὸ τῆ ἰδίας, "the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glorie." the testimonie of Irenæus likewise to this purpose is scarcely less explicit. "man," says he, adv. hæres. lib. iv. præfat. p. 211. "is a composition of flesh and spirit (animæ & carnis) and was made in the image of God and was fashioned by his hands; that is by the Son and Spirit, to whom he also said, let us make man." so again, lib. iv. c. xxii. p. 307, 8. adveniente perfecto, non alterum patrem videbimus, sed hunc quem nunc videre concupimus---neque alium christum & Dei

Filium expectabimus, sed hunc quem ex Mariâ virgine, &c.--neque *aliū* Spiritum sanctum percipimus (*al.* percipiemus) nisi hunc, qui est nobiscum, & qui clamat, Abba Pater, & in iisdem ipsis augmentum habebimus & proficiemus. adest enim, such is his language, c. xxxvii. ei (scil. Deo) semper, verbum & sapientia, Filius & Spiritus, per quos & in quibus omnia liberè & sponte fecit, ad quos & loquitur, dicens, *faciamus hominem ad imaginem & similitudinem nostram*, "with him (i. e. with God) " are always present the word and wisdom, the Son " and Spirit, by *whom* and in *whom* he freely and " of his own will made all things, and to whom " he speaks, saying, let us make man after our " own image and our own likeness." once more, c. lxxv. p. 380. speaking of the creation of man, he says it was effected, "the Father in his own " good pleasure determining upon and commanding it," (*bene sentiente & jubente.* gr. *εὐδοκῶντος καὶ κελεύοντος*) the Son ministering and forming (*δημιουργῶντος*) the " Spirit nourishing and increasing, " and man himself gradually improving and advancing towards perfection." it must surely be plain from these passages, that Irenæus believed as much the personalitie of the Spirit as that of the Son. and I think Athenagoras seems clearly enough to have expressed the same sentiment in the following passage, as we have it occurring, Legat. pro christian. §. 10. p. 40. Edit. Dechair. "how " strange is it," says he, "that we, who declare " our

“ our belief in God the Father, and God the Son, CHAP. I.
“ and in the Holie Spirit,” Θεὸν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν Θεὸν καὶ
πνεῦμα ἅγιον, explaining the nature of *their* union
and the distinction of their order, δεικνύσας αὐτῶν ἐν
τῇ ἐνώσει δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν, should ne-
vertheless be stigmatised as atheistic? to which we
may add, what he says, *ibid.* §. 11. p. 46. “ we
“ christians,” says he, “ make but little account
“ of this world, and are wholly intent upon know-
“ ing God and the word proceeding from him,
“ what is the union between the Son and the Fa-
“ ther, what the communion between the Father
“ and the Son, and what their union, what their
“ distinction, in the unitie of the Spirit, Father
“ and Son,” ἐνθymένων, τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον, τὸ παιδὸς, τὸ πατρὸς,
“ and acknowlege that inexpressibly better world,
“ which awaits us, if by innocence and puritie we
“ direct our course to it.”

C H A P. II.

On the original and essential dignitie of the Holie Spirit.

BOOK III.

HAVING in the preceding chapter, as we hope, sufficiently evinced the real existence of the Spirit, as a distinct, intelligent or conscious agent, we will go on, in the next place, to inquire into the original and essential dignitie of his nature, or the rank he bears in the scale of intellectual and moral Beings. and so far as I am able to derive any light from the scriptures upon this point, whence only it is, that we can have any knowlege of it at all; the sum of the christian doctrine in relation to it appears to be this; that the Holie Spirit is inferior to the Father of the universe, that he is inferior also to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, but that he is in rank and excellencie of nature superior to all other beings whatsoever. in the first place, he is inferior to the father of the universe. and one may wonder how the contrarie has ever come to be so generally believed. “the Spirit, it is said, maketh intercession for us;” that is with the supreme Deitie. but were this Spirit himself the one supreme Deitie, this would

would be impossible, for what being can intercede with himself? or were he one among two or three co-equal Deities, it would be altogether unnecessary. when our Savior says, "I will pray the father, and he will give you *another* comforter, even the spirit of truth;" does not this prayer itself, this application to "the father" for the mission of the Holie Spirit evidently implicate, that he is a being, not only distinct from, but subordinate to the father? what does the language of such a prayer necessarily carry in it; but that their enjoying the privilege of having such a "comforter," was wholly dependent upon the will of "the father," and that it was to his good pleasure, that they would be intirely indebted for it? but could this be true were there not a subordination of dignitie and power, subsisting between the father and the spirit? can any being be said to give that which is not at all under his disposal or direction; or can there be a strict and proper equalitie between the giver and the gift? says Athenagoras in a passage referred to above, namely, Legat. §. 10. p. 40. and speaking of the Holie Spirit as the inspirer of the ancient prophets; though "this Holie Spirit himself we affirm to be an efflux or emanation from the Deitie, flowing from and reflected back to him, like the rays of the sun." but, secondly, as the Holie Spirit is inferior to the father of the universe, so also to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. this seems evident from that order of enumeration,

meration, which we see to be so exactly adhered to in those passages of the new testament, where the three persons, Father, Son, and Holie Ghost, are distinctly mentioned. it is nearly in that very order, which I have now observed. and we may, I think, justly conclude it to have been fixed upon with a designed analogie to the essential dignitie of nature, that is respectively belonging to each. infinitely above all other beings whatsoever is the father of the universe, by the transcendent, peerless, unrivaled majestie of his sovereign attributes, exalted. next, in the glorious effulgencie of his being, to the one, supreme, eternal Deitie, is the great redeemer of mankind, that sublime, ineffable "word," who "was made flesh and dwelled among us;" the Holie Spirit, in the less resplendent honors of his nature, being inferior to both. and therefore in our Savior's commission to his apostles, that in another view has been already refered to, he is the last of the persons mentioned into whose name they were to baptise; "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holie Ghost." in that apostolical benediction, with which our public solemnities of religion are usually concluded, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is indeed first mentioned. I need not surely add; without any just ground given for suspecting, that the apostle intended to represent him, as being greater than the father. & tamen nullam invenimus institutionem, says Tertullian, speaking, præscript. hæretic. c. 34. of the corrupt doctrines

doctrines, that sprung up in the christian church even during the time of the apostles, inter tot diversitates perversitatum, quæ de Deo, creatore universorum controversiam moverit. nemo *alterum* Deum ausus est suspicari. facilius de filio quam de patre hæsitabatur, donec Marcion, &c. the same order however is, we see, observed with respect to the Holie Spirit, as in the last cited passage. and this, notwithstanding the deviation from it in another particular, is a circumstance, that seems still the more strongly to implicate, that such is indeed the very order, in which he stands among the intelligent and moral beings of the universe. in one passage indeed, namely, that which has been already cited in the preceding chapter from St. Paul to the Corinthians, and in support of the different argument there insisted upon, this order is directly reversed. but for that very reason the inference must upon the whole, be the same. besides, as the Holie Spirit is said to be sent by the father, so also is he elsewhere spoken of as being sent by the Son, acting in obedience and subordination to the will and counsels of the father. and does not this necessarily exclude the notion or idea of his being equal to either? “if I go not away,” says our Lord to his disciples, “the comforter will not come unto you: but, if I depart, *I* will send him unto you.” so again; “when the comforter is come, whom *I* will *send* unto you from the father, he shall testify of me.” and full to the

On the original and essential dignitie

like purport that other declaration; "HE shall
 " *glorifie* me, for he shall receive of *mine*, and shew
 " it unto you." it is likewise still farther re-
 markable under this particular, that, though the
 Holie Spirit be thus distinctly, and in such a va-
 rietie of passages, as have been to that purpose al-
 leged, mentioned in conjunction with the Father
 and the Son, yet is he never joined with either in
 any of those doxologies or ascriptions of praise,
 that are to be met with in the new testament. in
 one remarkable passage we find honor given to the
 Son in conjunction, though not in equalitie, with
 the Father. " blessing, and glorie, and honor,
 " and power," for in that exalted strain it runs,
 " be unto him, that sitteth upon the throne,"
 that is, to the one supreme Deitie, " and to the
 " Lamb for ever and ever." many other such so-
 lemn ascriptions of praise there are occurring in the
 new testament; some of them addressed singly to
 the Father, others of them separately to the Son;
 but no such doxologies are there, that I know of,
 addressed in the scriptures, either separately or con-
 junctly, to the Holie Spirit. is not this a difference
 carrying in it some strong intimation of the truth
 of those observations relating to the natural and
 original dignitie of this glorious being, that have
 been already insisted upon? " of all the beings,"
 says Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromat. lib. vii. p.
 700. C. " that we can by our understanding con-
 " template, him of more ancient birth, being with-
 " out

“ out time and without begining, the head and, as
“ it were, the first fruits in the order of existing
“ natures, is the Son. from whom we are to learn
“ the first and supreme above all causes, the father
“ of the universe, the most ancient, and of all the
“ most beneficent and kind; and who is not so
“ much to be spoken of by the lips or the just
“ knowlege of him in that way acquired, as by
“ the silent and admiring homage of the devout
“ and holie soul.” “ the noblest being on earth,”
as he observes, *ibid.* p. 701, 2. D. A. “ is the good
“ and pious man. in heaven the angel so nearly
“ participating in the pure, beatific life; but the
“ most august and perfect, the most excelling,
“ commanding, royal and beneficent among exist-
“ ing natures, is the Son, the nearest to the “ sole
“ omnipotent.” but should any, after all, be in-
clined to object to this second branch of our argu-
ment, that the contrarie of what we have supposed
to result from the reasoning contained in it may
seem rather to be implied in those many passages,
which represent our Savior as acting, whilst here on
earth, under the influence and conduct of the
Spirit; which speak for instance of his being “ led
“ by the Spirit into the wilderness,” of “ the
“ Spirit’s descending upon him like a dove,” of
his “ returning by the power of the Spirit into
“ Galilee,” of his being “ quickened” or raised
to life “ by the Spirit;” it may here be observed
in replie, that in some of these passages we may

perhaps most naturally understand the agencie or inspiration of the soveraign spirit himself, according to a not unusual signification of the term in the old testament writings. or, if in others of them we suppose that distinct being or person styled the Holie Spirit to be spoken of, we may very well interpret the agencie, which is in such passages ascribed to him, as being that of "ministration," and not of superioritie. and in this sense even angels are said to "strengthen him." compare Matth. iv. 11. with Luke xxii. 43. and thus we are naturally reminded of the third particular or concluding branch of this argument; namely,

That, though from the account given us in the scriptures of this doctrine it appears, that the Holie Spirit is inferior both to the Father and to the Son, yet it is from the scriptures to be concluded, that he is to all other beings whatsoever superior. among all those glorious exalted spirits, which inhabit the invisable, heavenly, eternal world, he is singly and alone, and by way of peculiaritie and high distinction called "the Spirit." when we read in the book of the Revelation of the seven spirits, that are before the throne, we may naturally presume, that the seven most exalted throughout the whole angelic hierarchie are the beings there referred to. yet the Holie Ghost seems by way of præ-eminence even above these to be styled "*the Spirit*." ministrat, says Irenæus adv. hæres. lib. iv. c. xvii. p. 304. ei (scil. Deo) sua progenies

progenies & figuratio sua, id est filius & spiritus sanctus, verbum & sapientia; *quibus* “serviunt” & *subiecti* sunt” omnes angeli. and this, I think, is made farther evident by the manner, in which, as we have seen, our Savior speaks of him, and of him alone in conjunction with the father and with himself upon so peculiarly solemn an occasion, as that of his last commission to his apostles to publish the gospel to mankind, accompanied with the institution of a solemnity wholly peculiar to itself. in confirmation of all which we must by no means omit to add, that nothing is more apparent in the gospel, than that next to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holie Spirit is that Being, who bears the most interesting and conspicuous part in the conduct and execution of that divine scheme, which, according to the counsels of infinite compassion and unerring wisdom, had, before the foundation of the world, been planned out for the redemption of mankind, and which in these later days has been manifested by our Lord Jesus Christ in person. now, as in this dispensation of divine grace it was thought proper, that the Being, who, next to the one eternal father, is the greatest, the most august, glorious and venerable, throughout the whole immensity of rational existences, should have a part assigned him, a part, which from this superlative dignity of his nature we cannot but conclude to be the most eminent and important in the whole œconomie of our salvation; may we not naturally infer upon the principles

principles of analogie, and according to that wonderful consent and harmonie, that is seen in all the other constitutions and works of God, that the being, who appears in fact to have, next to him, the most honorable and distinguished share in carrying on and promoting it, should have been thus constituted second to him in office on account of his bearing the very same rank of præ-eminence in point of original dignitie and excellence of being? and indeed what an amazing degree of knowlege is that, which the apostle ascribes to the Spirit, in comparing the knowlege, which he has of the things of God, to that, which a man has of what is passing in his own mind! "for what man," such is the language of the passage I refer to, "knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man," or, as we ought to read the passage, "no one," "but the Spirit of God." all the most exalted knowlege of divine things, that ever has been, or can be, attained to by mere humanitie, or even by the yet higher orders, is, as it were, ignorance itself, in comparison of that clear, unclouded knowlege of them, which is possessed by this glorious being. and, as he is styled in scripture by way of peculiaritie and distinction, "the Spirit," so also, and by way of eminence still, the "*Holie Spirit*." now, as this is an emphatical mode of expression sometimes made use of in scripture, as well as others of the like nature,

of the Holie Spirit.

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to denote the moral attributes of God himself in ^{CHAP. II.}
all their infinite and spotless puritie, it is undoubt-
edly intended in this other application of it to ex-
press that high distinguishing excellencie of moral
character, which is essentially belonging to this
inconceivably glorious and exalted being.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

On the offices and relative character of the Holie Spirit.

BOOK III.

HAVING in the two preceding chapters offered some illustrations of the personalitie of the Holie Spirit, and upon the rank he bears in the scale of intellectual and moral natures, we are now to consider the relation he stands in to ourselves, and the offices, that are sustained by him with respect to mankind. some intimations of this sort could not but occur in treating upon the two former topics ; several of the very same passages of scripture being at once and equally proofs of the Spirit's personalitie, of his rank in the moral universe, and of the character or office he sustains relatively to the human race. but these hints are now to be more largely insisted upon in reference to this last mentioned topic, and in their connexion with such other reflexions and remarks, as may tend to the elucidation of it. and here it is to be recollected in the first place, as being indeed a principal and leading observation in this argument, that, according to the doctrine of scripture, the
holie

Holie Spirit was, next to the Lord Jesus Christ CHAP. III.
himself, the chief agent or minister of divine providence in the introduction and establishment of christianitie among mankind. this is one of those observations, that has been already hinted at, but only so far, as was necessarie to a just representation of some other particulars relative to the general subject, the proof of it being, as we judged, most properly refered to that distinct part of it, that now lies before us. of which there is no particular illustration more conspicuous or more naturally recurring in the first place to our thoughts, when reflecting upon it, than this peculiarly eminent and important part, that was in the œconomie of the gospel by the supreme Deitie and ruler of the world assigned to that illustrious being, of whose character and office we are now attempting an explication. this part or office he assumed upon our Savior's ascension into heaven. and our Savior himself speaks of it, as having a close, and in the plan and order of divine providence, a necessary connexion with his own personal ministerie upon earth, as immediately succeding upon it, and as being in the very nature and design of it, of the highest consequence to the complete execution and accomplishment of the same grand scheme, that had from the beginning been formed for the redemption of our sinful race. "nevertheless," he says to his apostles, "I tell you the truth;" I am going to declare to you a truth of the most

important and interesting nature. what now was this truth thus interesting and important? why, thus it follows; "it is *expedient* for you, that I go away; for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you." and when he is come, "he will," as the appointed agent and instrument of divine providence in carrying on that one and the same scheme, which I myself by my own appearance upon earth have been setting on foot; "when he is come," "he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." elsewhere he assures them, that, in subserviencie to this important end, "he should guide them into all truth," that "he should shew them things to come," that "he should teach them all things," that "he should bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them," that "he should testifie of him," or confirm to the view of the whole world, and by the most incontestable evidences, the divinitie of his mission; and that in all these important characters, he should "abide with them for ever." well then might he speak of him, as being indeed in a most eminent sense, even next in worth and eminence to himself, "another comforter." and all these assurances and prædictions we find to have been most exactly and punctually fulfilled by those miraculous powers, with which the apostles of our Lord, and other primitive believers in his gospel, were

were after his ascension so liberally endued ; by which alone they were enabled to propagate and diffuse his glorious gospel throughout all the regions and territories of the earth, amidst the fiercest opposition made to it by the mightiest potentates and kings, and the most inveterate prejudices against it, founded upon the ignorance, superstition, idolatry and moral corruption of mankind. in full confidence, that this would be indeed the case, and in consequence of his perfect knowledge concerning the whole plan and system of divine providence in relation to the gospel-scheme, our Savior assures them that they should perform even “ greater works,” than any that had been wrought by himself. and on the same account he enjoins it upon them, that when they should be called to appear “ before kings and rulers for his sake, and “ be delivered up, they should take no thought “ before-hand, what they should speak, neither “ premeditate, but that whatsoever should be given “ them,” or miraculously infused into their minds, that they “ should speak ; for that it should not “ be they themselves, that should speak, but the “ Holie Ghost.” accordingly, no sooner was Jesus ascended, but the Holie Ghost did come in fact ; and with particular solemnity, with peculiar circumstances of splendor and dignity, take upon him the exercise of that office, which had been originally assigned him, and the description or nature of which is contained in the passages we have

been reciting. “ and when the day of Pentecost
 “ was fully come, they, the apostles, were all with
 “ one accord in one place. and suddenly there
 “ came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing
 “ mightie wind, and it filled all the house, where
 “ they were sitting. and there appeared unto
 “ them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat
 “ upon each of them. and they were all filled
 “ with the Holie Ghost.” and at this very instant
 in consequence of this divine, miraculous effusion,
 and in the most exact and admirable connexion for
 the illustration of that divine wisdom, which so
 beautifully “ orders all things,” they began to ex-
 ercise and display that most amazing gift of tongues,
 not only so astonishing in itself, but of such pecu-
 liar importance towards ensuring the success of the
 gospel, and it’s propagation throughout the various
 kingdoms of the world so much diversified by their
 speech and language. “ they began to speak with
 “ other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.”
 and to this solemn prelude, or enterance of the
 Holie Spirit upon his office, as the appointed guide
 and inspirer of the apostles, as well as to the assu-
 rances given, and representations made by our
 blessed Savior to these apostles themselves upon this
 head, we find the language of their historie and of
 their severall epistles to be exactly consonant. to
 this Holie Spirit all their miraculous powers and
 performances, all their triumphs over the heathen
 adversarie, all their success in preaching the gospel
 are

are invariably ascribed ; and under his directing and animating influences they are ever said to proceed. when Philip accosts the Ethiopian treasurer, the language of the historian is exactly conformable to what he knew to be the realitie and truth of the case. for thus it runs ; “ then *the Spirit* said unto “ Philip,” “ go near and join thyself to this chariot.” so likewise in the style of the same historian, when St. Peter was contemplating that miraculous vision, which was introductorie to his interview with Cornelius and the conversion of that Roman officer, “ *the Spirit* says unto him, behold “ three men seek thee.” and St. Peter in his own representation of that matter expresses himself thus ; “ *the Spirit* bad me go with them, nothing doubting.” thus too, when Agabus foretold a dearth, that should be throughout all the world ;” that is, throughout the whole roman empire, or, as the original so easily admits, throughout “ the whole” land, or country, meaning Judæa, which accordingly came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar, he is said to have “ signified it “ by *the Spirit*.” and when for wise, prudential reasons, the apostles did for the present forbear to preach the gospel in this or that particular place, notwithstanding some inclination they had to do it, this forbearance is ascribed to the prohibition, and restraining influences of “ the Spirit.” “ when “ Paul and Barnabas, we are told, had gone “ throughout Phrygia and the regions of Galatia, “ and

“ and were forbid by the *Holie Ghost* to preach
 “ the word,” at that time “ in Asia, after they
 “ were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bi-
 “ thinia, but *the Spirit* suffered them not.” thus
 likewise in the epistles, that wonderful success,
 which accompanied the preaching of the gospel,
 and those miraculous powers and attestations, to
 which it was owing, are constantly and in the most
 express and positive terms ascribed to the operation
 and agencie of the Spirit. “ I have therefore,”
 says St. Paul, “ whereof I may glorie through
 “ Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to
 “ God;” that is, in the great concerns of reli-
 gion; for I “ will not dare to speak of any of
 “ those things, which God has not wrought by
 “ me: to make the gentiles obedient by word and
 “ deed, through mightie signs and wonders, by the
 “ power of *the Spirit* of God. so that from Je-
 “ rusalem, and round about unto Illyricum I have
 “ fully preached the gospel of Christ.” the truths
 and doctrines of the gospel likewise, on account of
 the Spirit’s agencie in the revelation of them, are
 called in another of his epistles “ the things of the
 “ Spirit of God.” and for the same reason they,
 whose minds had through the efficacious influences
 of the gospel been formed into the sentiments of
 pietie and the dispositions of virtue, are said by the
 same apostle, to be “ washed,” to be “ sanctified,”
 “ in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by
 “ the Spirit of our God;” by the power and
 efficacie

efficacie he means of that religion, which was introduced and established among mankind “in the “name,” or by the authoritie of the Lord Jesus; and by the ministration of the Holie “Spirit.” such is the view, that is given us in the new testament of the office, that was assigned to this glorious being relative to the promulgation and establishment of the gospel-scheme. such the consenting voice of the evangelical scriptures upon this head. now, as all the blessings of christianitie were as much intended in the original purpose of the soveraign bestower for our benefit and that of others, upon whom “the ends of the world are “come,” as of those among whom it was first published and made known, and as it was by the ministration of the Holie Spirit, that it gained that success and firm establishment in the world, in consequence of which we now enjoy these blessings, it is evident, that on these accounts he may be said as truly to be *our* “comforter,” as he was to have been the “comforter of the apostles,” *our* “guide” and “teacher,” as well as theirs. there is indeed a peculiarly strong and emphatical sense, in which this language is to be applied to them; they and others among the primitive christians being the very persons, in whom the miraculous powers of the Spirit immediately resided, and who actually felt his inspiring influences. but still with respect to the moral intention and privileges of the gospel we are upon the same general footing with them. and in

in proportion to the high and interesting nature of the blessings themselves, that have been conferred upon us by it, must of necessity be the importance of that relation subsisting between the Holie Spirit, and all who partake of them, in consequence of that ministration or instrumentalitie of this glorious being, to which the success and propagation of it's doctrines have been owing. and as the agency of the Holie Spirit did thus, according to the appointed plan and order of divine providence, essentially contribute to the establishment of christianitie in the world, those at any time, who are induced by it to cultivate the sentiments, and pursue the paths, of virtue, may on this account be justly said in the phraseologie of scripture to be "led by the Spirit;" and those, who thus cultivating the temper, and pursuing the paths of virtue, are in recompence enjoying the pleasures and consolations of religion, to be by him assisted in "crying, Abba, Father."

But besides those miraculous powers, with which the apostles, together with many others of the earliest converts to christianitie, were endued, and which, as we have seen, were communicated by the Holie Spirit, there is an influence of another nature plainly ascribed to him in the new testament; an influence of the moral kind, and respecting those virtuous endowments of the soul, which are indispensably necessarie in the case of everie one, in order to his being a genuin disciple of Christ, or a partaker in the felicities of heaven.

with respect, I say, to these moral qualities of the human mind, there is in the new testament an agencie ascribed to the Holie Spirit, so far at least as relates to those primitive times, in which the books of it were originally written. thus St. Paul speaking in his epistle to the Romans, not of miraculous gifts, but of the common obligations of everie christian; to wit of "hope, of patience," and of "prayer," says expressly, with reference to the performance of these duties, that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities." to the same purpose likewise he expresses himself in one of his epistles to the Theſſalonians. "God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. he therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God; who has also given unto us his Holie Spirit." what in this connexion can the gift of the Holie Spirit implicate, if not those gracious influences, which the Theſſalonians, supposing them not to be wanting to themselves, might be assured of receiving from him in their pursuit of moral puritie and perfection? in these passages he appears evidently to speak of some gifts, that were conferred by the Holie Spirit upon all the primitive, christian converts in common. but this was not true in fact of the miraculous powers he communicated. we must therefore necessarily understand them in the sense, that has been already assigned. and in the same sense likewise may be understood several other passages of the new testament, of which indeed in

this and the preceding chapter another interpretation has been proposed, if that should be thought more agreeable to their particular phraseologie and connexion. such as those, in which God is said to “ give the Holie Spirit to them who ask him, in “ which christians are said to be led by the Spirit,” “ and to be sealed by the Spirit unto the day of “ redemption.” though in these and other expressions of a similar kind, it is not at all improbable, that both these interpretations might sometimes be included. but it is in respect to the last cited passage in particular to be observed, that the being “ sealed unto the day of redemption,” must necessarily be considered as referring to those moral endowments and qualifications, by which alone, according to the inviolable constitution of the gospel-covenant, our title to the rewards and honors of immortalitie can be ensured. if therefore by “ the Holie Spirit of God” we understand a person or conscious being so styled, we must of course suppose a moral agencie to be here by the apostle ascribed to him. and for the same reason there are several other passages, which cannot with propriety be in any other manner interpreted. for example, in the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul speaks of “ the Spirit” as being “ the earnest of our inheritance.” of what inheritance? the heavenly one undoubtedly, as is by the context apparent. but miraculous gifts are in themselves no earnest of this inheritance. St. Paul

Paul supposes, that a man may possibly be possessed of them, and yet be nothing in the sight of God. and our Savior himself speaks of those to whom, though once endued with them, he should nevertheless say, in the hour of future judgment, "depart from me, I know you not; ye workers of iniquitie." when therefore the Spirit is said to be "the earnest" of our heavenly inheritance, this must needs be considered as refering to his agencie and influence in inspiring those good and virtuous affections, which, according to the tenor and conditions of the gospel-covenant, are our necessarie and infallible meetness for it. and yet it is evidently with a reference to this heavenly inheritance, that the apostle elsewhere speaks of the "earnest of the Spirit." "he, who has established us together with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God;" who also hath sealed us and given us *the earnest of the Spirit* in our hearts. that this is indeed his reference here is evident from another passage so nearly similar, which we have occurring in the same epistle, and in which this application of the terms is still more explicit. "we," he says, "that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened, not, that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon; that mortalitie may be swallowed up of life. now he that has wrought us to the self-same thing, is God;" who also has given us the earnest of his Spirit; who in order to render our prospect of the heavenly felicitie in the

highest degree animating and triumphant, has appointed his Holie Spirit to be the inspirer of those virtuous affections, by which only we can be qualified for partaking in it. and indeed what but an influence of this kind could our apostle mean, by speaking of it as being “an earnest *in our hearts* ;” the very seat and residence of virtue? whereas miraculous gifts considered merely in themselves could at most affect only and influence the understanding; and sometimes consisted in nothing more than sensitive and bodily impressions. or with what propriety in any other view could he say concerning the christians in general of those times, that they were the “temples of the Holie Ghost,” and that “the Spirit of God dwelled in them?” since so evident it is, that all in common were not even then sharers in his miraculous gifts.

And now let it be considered, in the third place, what objection can lie against our supposing that these moral influences of the Spirit, far from being the blessing only of the primitive times, were designed to be the uninterrupted privilege of the christian church in every age. of the angels we are informed, that they are “ministering Spirits, “sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs “of salvation.” and by this denomination of the persons, to whom they are to minister from their moral character and qualifications for the enjoyment of the heavenly felicitie, it seems plainly enough intimated, that one principal part of this ministration

tion is of the moral kind. but, who has ever thought of appropriating it to the first ages of christianitie? and would there not be something extremely unnatural in a sentiment like this? must it not then be at least equally unnatural to restrain and limit in any such manner the influences of the Holie Spirit? is he less friendly to man than they? was he reluctant and averse to the continuing any longer in the character of our "comforter" and our guide? when we reflect upon the amazing and inexpressible dignitie of this glorious being, what can be more incongruous than to imagine, that he should be invested with an office of so transient a nature? and on the other hand, as it is, on all sides, agreed among us, that in the miraculous propagation of the gospel, he acted as the great minister of providence, what more natural than to suppose, that, though the communication of these miraculous powers was so soon to cease, he should still retain the same general character or office of being the promoter of it's interests among mankind? is there not an apparent suitableness and beautie in such a constitution or divine appointment, by virtue of which the same illustrious being, by whose agencie the gospel was at first externally and visibly established, should likewise be employed in a ministration intended to enforce it's invisible, moral and saving influences upon all, who profess it? do we not discern a pleasing harmonie, an admirable connexion in the designs and operations of
divine

divine providence, while reflecting, that at the time, when an external institution of religion so excellently adapted for promoting the moral puritie and the eternal salvation of mankind took place on earth, at that very time a great illustrious office was instituted in heaven, or however more directly assumed, for dispensing throughout everie succeeding age those secret, invifible influences, by which this ultimate intention of the gospel might be in the most effectual manner promoted? thus then it appears, that there is another most important relation subsisting between us and the Holie Spirit. not only did he act the part of *our* friend and “com-
 “forter” by induing the apostles with those miraculous powers from on high, in consequence of which it is, that we are enjoying the inestimable privileges of the christian faith; but now, even now, is he exercising towards us the friendly office of the inspirer of virtue, the cherisher and promoter, the abettor and assistant of all, that is generous and just, worthie and godlike in the heart of man. and thus, as we find the main purport of our argument to have been expressed by Mr. Baxter, thus is “our Sun in glorie continually
 “sending down his beams and influence on the
 “earth; even the Spirit of the father, to be his
 “constant agent here below, and to plead his
 “cause, and do his work on the hearts of men.
 “and, as the apostles, who were to found the
 “church, had that Spirit in so conspicuous a de-
 “gree,

“ gree, and for such various works of wonder and
“ power, as might suffice to confirm their testi-
“ monie to the world; so all others, as well as
“ they, to the end, *have* the Spirit for those works
“ of love and renovation, which are necessarie to
“ their own obedience and salvation.” See his
Life of Faith, Part II. c. iv. p. 105. §. 24. 4to.
it is to this perpetuated office of the Holie Spirit
for promoting the moral efficacie of the gospel,
particularly by presenting just and striking views of
it to the mind, that Irenæus so evidently refers
when upon mentioning the Spirit “ of God” or
the Holie Ghost, he adds; “ who exhibits the dis-
“ pensations, *τας οἰκονομίας*, of the Father and the
“ Son,” *secundam quas aderat generi humano*, ac-
cording to the Latin interpreter, but much more
explicitly in the Greek, “ throughout everie gene-
“ ration of mankind *καθ’ ἐκάστην γενεάν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις*,
“ as the father pleases.” Vid. *adv. hæres. lib. iv.*
c. lii. p. 360. so again, *c. lxvi. p. 364.* the cha-
racter or description of this divine Spirit is---effu-
sus---a *conditio mundi usque ad finem in ipsum*
humanum genus. “ poured out from the creation
“ to the end of the world,” not at particular times
or upon particular persons only, but “ upon the
“ human race itself.” this general sentiment as
well as the real personalitie of the Holie Spirit,
together with the rank and dignitie he sustains in
the order of intelligent and moral agents according
to the observations, which we have upon that head
been

BOOK III.

been insisting on, are all very clearly expressed by Tertullian in the following passage, as they occur in his piece de virginibus velandis, c. i. Op. p. 175. quale est enim ut diabolo semper operante & adjiciente quotidie ad iniquitatis ingenia, opus Dei aut cessaverit, aut proficere destiterit? cum propterea Paracletum *miserit* Dominus, ut quoniam humana mediocritas omnia *semel* capere non poterat, *paulatim* dirigeretur, & ordinaretur & ad perfectum perduceretur disciplina, ab illo *vicario* Domini Spiritu sancto.---justitia primo fuit in rudimentis, natura: dehinc per legem & prophetas promovit in infantiam: dehinc per evangelium efferebuit in juventutem: *nunc* per paracletum componitur in maturitatem. hic erit solus *a Christo magister* & dicendus & verendus. non autem ab se loquitur, sed quæ *mandantur* a Christo. hic *solus* antecessor, quia solus *post* christum. so again, præscript. hæretic. c. xxviii. neglexerit officium Dei villicus, Christi vicarius? (scil. Spiritus Sanctus.) or will any one imagin ought of the contrarie to be implied in that expression he makes use of; præscript. hæretic. c. xiii. p. 207; vim spiritus sancti; or in that other, ibid. ex spiritu patris Dei & virtute, supposing the same subject to be spoken of in both? I think he cannot. for it is still *vicariam* vim (scil. Christi.) and surely Christ's *substitute* or vice-gerent must be a person. when the admirers of Simon Magus styled him "the great power of God," it was not, I presume, with any intention

tion to rob him of his personalitie, or of reducing him to a mere modal existence. “the great *power*” of God, evidently denotes here a man, a *person*: “this *man* is the great *power* of God.” we have only to observe farther under this head, that all we have been advancing relative to these moral influences of the Holie Spirit is indeed as strictly peculiar to the dispensation of the gospel, as even the communication of those miraculous powers, by which it was originally propagated amongst mankind. the doctrine of divine influences in general as necessarie to the production of good dispositions in the soul of man, and as bestowed in full sufficiency for that purpose by the kind, indulgent father of our beings, is very far from being so. we have already shewn it to be a clear, undoubted maxim or principle of natural religion. but this or that particular method of conveying these influences are considerations totally distinct. and as natural religion did not so much as discover the existence of such a being, as the Holie Spirit, it could of course give us no information concerning his agencie in reference to them.

But once more, in the fourth place, another relation subsisting between the Holie Spirit and the human race is that, which is constituted by his being our intercessor before the throne of divine and soveraign majestie. this he is, not indeed in that high and eminent degree, in which the same character belongs to the great redeemer. but still

On the offices and relative character, &c.

“ he makes intercession for us ;” and that “ with
 “ groanings, which cannot be uttered,” with an
 inexpressible intenseness and ardor of devotion.
 and if so, how great must be his benevolence and
 love to man ! how deeply must he interest himself
 in our salvation ! and with what a divine pleasure
 and complacencie may we believe such a fervent
 intercessor in our behalf to exercise that other
 office so nearly connected with our everlasting in-
 terests, of communicating and conveying to our
 souls those gracious, inspiring influences from above,
 by which we may be daily advancing in our meet-
 ness for that future world ; that world, where in
 communion with the Father, with the Son, and
 with the Holie Spirit, “ with an innumerable com-
 “ panie of angels, and with the general assemblie
 “ of the church of the first-born, whose names
 “ are written in heaven,” we shall pass a trium-
 phant eternitie in adoring the goodness, in admiring
 the wisdom and celebrating the praises of our
 creator, who is “ God over all, blessed for ever-
 “ more.”

C H A P. IV.

On the practical and moral uses of the preceding doctrine concerning the Holie Spirit.

FROM what has been already offered in ex-^{CHAP. IV.}
 plicating the true and genuin doctrine of the
 scriptures relative to the Holie Spirit, it will, I hope,
 fully appear to be a doctrine, not in the least de-
 gree repugnant to any one sentiment or dictate of
 natural reason whatsoever. those therefore, who
 cannot for their own parts admit the truth of it,
 on account of any doubts they may possibly be en-
 tertaining in reference to the authoritie of that
 christian revelation, to which alone we are indebted
 for the knowlege of it; must yet allow, that others,
 who do upon this authoritie embrace it, are so far
 acting in perfect consistencie with the highest claims
 of reason in matters of religion. still however it
 is but a small and comparatively trifling recom-
 mendation of any doctrine or principle advanced
 under the notion or idea of a religious one, that it
 is no way shocking or repugnant to human reason.
 it must also, in order to answer it's pretensions, be
 accommodated to the cherishing and enforcement
 3 D 2 of

of human virtue. and if, upon a distinct and particular consideration of all the peculiarities of the gospel, it should appear, that they are in a most direct and eminent manner adapted to this end ; what can give us an higher idea of it's intrinsic excellencie, or afford a stronger presumption of it's truth ? so far as we have already proceeded in the illustration of these peculiarities, I flatter myself, that this capital and leading point has been made sufficiently evident. in the present chapter it is our design to applie this moral test to the doctrine of the Holie Spirit. if it will not bear it, I shall freely acknowlege, that the pains I have taken in exhibiting the scripture account of it has been but ill employed. but if, contrariwise, it should appear to be a doctrine admirable in it's moral tendencie, and highly efficacious in the nature and scope of it towards promoting the progress of the soul in virtue ; there are then two maxims or principles, which will immediately follow. in the first place it will be evident, that it is a matter of no small importance to ascertain, what is indeed the true and genuin doctrine of scripture upon the subject, since undoubtedly the moral influences and uses, that we have been speaking of, cannot arise from any corruptions of the doctrine passing under it's name, but only from the pure and unsophisticated doctrine itself as exhibited in the simplicities of the scriptures. unless we can suppose human inventions to be more efficacious for answering the
grand

grand and ultimate view of all divine revelations, than those very principles themselves, which these revelations contain ; which would be strangely inverting the apostle's observation, and in effect to say, that the " foolishness of man is wiser than " God." but, if there be indeed such a moral force and energie attending it, then is there a still farther consequence most evidently resulting ; and that is, that however exact and regular may be our speculations upon the point, the practical and affectionate application of them to the views and temper of the mind, is, that, in which they ought to terminate ; and about which we are to be most of all sollicitous. thinking aright either upon this or upon any other topic of religion, is only such a means for the advancement of our minds in virtue, which, if not improved for that purpose, can then only conduce to the aggravation of our guilt.

With such considerations then, as these, in our eye, let us now go on to that remaining topic of argument, which in the discussion of this subject we proposed to enlarge upon. it was, as may be remembered, to specify and point out those practical and moral purposes, to which the discoveries, that have been made to us in scripture concerning the Holie Spirit, are to be applied, and of which we have just now been speaking in general.

And here it is to be observed, in the first place, that many of the discoveries, that have been made to us by the gospel with relation to this glorious Being,

Being, are of the very same kind and nature with those informations it has given us concerning the great redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ. and on this account they carry in them a peculiar usefulness and excellencie. by this means the same religious and moral truths are more efficaciously enforced, a deeper sense of their importance will be naturally impressed upon the mind, and our idea of christianitie, as a consistent and uniform scheme, most accurately, and with the highest energie, contrived for promoting the same ultimate views, be greatly heightened. and in this consistencie and conspiring tendencie of it's doctrines we have one natural mark or characteristic of it's genuineness and truth, as a divinely authorised and miraculous institution of religion. in the subject, for example, of our present reflexions we see the majestie of the great God and father of all, the grandeur and extent of the moral universe, the ascending scale of intellectual and rational beings, the dignitie of human nature, the worth and value of immortal souls, the condescending grace of heaven towards sinful man, with other highly interesting and momentous particulars, illustrated and enforced, not only by the personal glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, his mission from the Father, his intercession in the heavenly world, but also by discoveries of the very same kind and nature relating to the Holie Spirit, our comforter. and is there not in this re-iterated voice of God, in this peculiar

liar care, that has been taken by the wisdom of the supreme, unerring Deitie, to engage our attention to these several principles, a dreadful aggravation involved of our guilt, if after all we remain unmindful of them, and suffer not the passions and affections of our souls to be warmed and invigorated in the practice of our moral dutie by their efficacie and power?

But, secondly, the appointment of a being so transcendent in excellence and dignitie of nature, as the Holie Spirit, to that particular office of being the perpetual guide and inspirer of the apostles in their publication of the gospel to mankind, and by the communication of miraculous powers so effectually to qualifie them for doing it with success, is in the most direct and admirable manner and in a way intirely peculiar and distinct, adapted to confirm our idea of christianitie itself, as a system of doctrine in the highest degree interesting and important. this is an office, to which there is nothing similar in what the scripture has reveled to us concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. but from the amazing and incomprehensible glories of his nature do we not immediately infer the importance of that spiritual kingdom, which he came into the world to erect? after a while indeed and before the gospel had made any considerable progress in the world, this illustrious being disappeared from among men. nor would it have been any way congruous to these superlative glories and transcending excellencies of his nature, that he should
long

long have inhabited on earth. what then? was the preaching and publishing of the glad tidings of his "everlasting gospel" left for the future to the management and conduct of a few obscure and despised fishermen? no; immediately to our Savior's personal ministrie upon earth succeeded that of the Holie Spirit, by his secret and invifible, but yet powerful and efficacious, influences, conducting, inspiring and animating the apostles of our Lord, and enabling them by signs and wonders and mightie works to vanquish all opposition. thus was it in the plan of divine providence contrived, that everie thing relating to the propagation of christianitie in the world should be in the highest degree august and venerable. and this, by the way, shews us of how much importance it is in our examination of christianitie, to take in, within the compass of our reflexions, the whole scheme or intire system of it; and thus, as St. Paul has expressed it, "compare spiritual things with spiritual." with what contempt has it been often treated on account of the povertie of it's founder, and of it's immediate disciples? and true it is, that "the Son of man," while a sojourner here, "had not where to lay his head." but then, if you take in the whole compass of christianitie it is equally true, that he had "lain in the bosom of the father from the begining," and that in real dignitie of person he is second to none besides. it is true, that the first preachers of the gospel,

even the apostles of our Lord, were men, for the ^{CHAP. IV.} most part, of low, diminutive rank in point of worldly condition. but it is equally true, that they had for their constant attendant, guide and instructor in preaching it, a being no less eminent than the Holie Spirit of God. but the use, that we are now more particularly to make of the preceding reflexions, is of another nature. and for what end, I would ask, has the gospel been made thus venerable in it's aspect? why thus magnificently introduced? why these great exalted beings, beings in rank and dignitie of nature exalted above angels and arch-angels, thus immediately and personally employed in publishing it's glad tidings? why, even after the Son of God himself had appeared in our world "preaching" and proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord?" why, that the dignitie and grandeur of the dispensation might still be maintained, and without intermission carried on, was the next in rank and excellencie of being appointed, to propagate by the miraculous powers he conferred the welcome news? why, if not to give us the highest possible idea of the importance of the christian scheme, and by this means to excite our attention to it's doctrines and quicken us in our observance of it's rules? and, "if we
" sin willfully, after having," in such a manner, as this, "received the knowlege of the truth, there
" remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain
" fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation,

“tion, which shall devour the adverſarie.” he that deſpiſed Moſes’s law “died without mercie “under two or three witneſſes; of how much “ſorer puniſhment then, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be “thought worthie, who hath trodden under foot “the Son of God, and counted the blood of the “covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified an un- “holie thing, and done deſpight to the *ſpirit of* “*grace?*” but,

Thirdly, the miniſtration of the Holie Spirit in diffuſing after this miraculous manner the knowlege of chriſtianitie throughout the world, was only of a temporarie nature. theſe miraculous powers have long ſince been withdrawn. but there is, as we have ſeen, another office, with which he has been inveſted by the ſovereign Lord of all, and which he ſtill retains; namely, that of enforcing it’s moral influence upon the heart and affections. and how excellently is this particular relation ſubſiſting between the Holie Spirit and ourſelves; how excellently, I ſay, is it calculated to remind us of that, which is the great and ultimate end of the goſpel; that, in which all our knowlege of it ought to terminate, and without which that knowlege, be it ever ſo accurate, ever ſo copious, can be of no avail to the true happineſs or the final ſalvation of our immortal ſouls? in the diſcoverie of this character or office ſuſtained by the Holie Spirit, what a clear convincing proof have we of the inherent worth, of the eſſential excellencie of moral righteouſneſs,

teousness, and of it's value and acceptableness in the sight of God? were it a thing of that trivial account, which the representations often given of it but too manifestly implicate, is it likely, is it possible, that so transcendently glorious a being; a being thus highly exalted in rank and dignity of nature, should have been in the plan and model of divine government solemnly invested with a stated and perpetual office, the sole design of which is to promote the love and practice of this moral righteousness; for which reason among others, that have been already assigned, he is by way of eminence and peculiar propriety styled the Holie Spirit? is it not, on the other hand, immediately to be inferred from this particular part, or measure taken, in the moral dispensations of divine providence, that inherent, personal virtue is, according to the unerring and decisive judgment of heaven, a quality of the highest estimation, and that it must therefore be to man, "the one thing needful," the grand, the ultimate concern of all? il nous montre, as Mr. Turretin, Serm. V. p. 306. says well, par les impressions qu'il nous donne de la piété, la *nécessité* des bonnes œuvres, & de l'étude de la sanctification.

But, fourthly, as that office of the Holie Spirit, by virtue of which his agency is continually employed in promoting the moral influences of the gospel, is thus directly calculated to impress upon our minds a more lively and efficacious sense of the

On the practical and moral uses of

supreme importance of moral righteousness, so likewise is it admirably adapted to encourage us in the persuasion, that no concurrence, on the part of heaven, will be ever wanting, that can be necessarie to ensure the success of our own virtuous efforts. this is a persuasion originally founded upon the goodness, puritie and perfections of the divine Being. and we have accordingly in a former part of this work shewn it to have been a well-known sentiment in the heathen world. but in reference to a truth so fundamental to the practice of virtue, so essential to the happiness of man, how acceptable must be an additional declaration made of it by the divinely instituted office of the Holie Spirit; a declaration, not only additional to the voice of nature and the suggestions of reason, but also to the general language and assurances of the scriptures themselves, upon this head? and is it not indeed a declaration of this kind? when we are once persuaded, that the sovereign Deitie has appointed a being, no less than him, who is next in dignitie of nature to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, "the most express image of his person," to an office, the peculiar design of which consists in dispensing those quickening and vital influences, by which the great truths of religion may become thoroughly efficacious towards producing the fruits of righteousness and the habits of universal goodness in the soul, can we ever believe, that this sovereign Deitie himself will be sparing in the communication of these supplies?

supplies? do not the discoveries contained in the scriptures of such an office actually subsisting, according to the will and by the appointment of the supreme father, amount to a clear, solemn, authentic promise, a promise made, under all the peculiar sanctions of the gospel, that he is ever ready and disposed to “give wisdom” to those, who shall duly “seek it?” if a being so wonderfully illustrious is appointed to be the dispenser of these blessings, may we not well conclude, that the blessings themselves will be communicated with infinite liberality and munificence? and can there be a more pleasing, a more joyful, a more triumphant hope entertained in the heart of man, than that not one exertion of our mental powers after higher attainments in virtue, be it ever so aspiring, shall in any period of our immortal being, fail of success, for want of any necessarie influences to be derived “from the father of lights, from whom cometh everie “good and everie perfect gift?” if not, then how peculiarly welcome to our minds must be a doctrine thus peculiarly well adapted to enliven and invigorate such a hope?

Again, fifthly, the office of the Holie Spirit in ministering, according to the appointment and designation of the supreme Deitie, to the virtue of mankind, furnishes us with a distinct argument of a very convincing nature in proof of a future state; and it must consequently enforce in a proportionable degree everie motive to the practice of virtue arising

arising from the belief of such a state. to me it seems, that nothing can even be imagined more inconsistent or improbable, than that a being of such illustrious dignitie should have been by the eternal Deitie himself in the most solemn manner invested with an office, the sole design of which was to influence the mind of man to the habit and to the love of virtue, if that virtue itself was so soon to be extinct, as at the period of everie man's days on earth. surely if the purposes only of this transient life had been to be answered by it, the office would have much better suited some being of vastly inferior nature. nay, may we not justly presume it to have been among the principal, if not of all others the most peculiar reason, of those discoveries, which the gospel has made to us concerning the designation of this glorious being to such an office, to convince us, that those godlike virtues, with which, in consequence of his having been appointed to it, it is his grand and special employment to inspire the human heart, are to survive the grave, cannot be subject to it's triumphs, but will live into eternitie? the doctrine of a future state was of too much moment, not to make a part of that primitive religion of mankind, which was founded upon the illuminations of nature and the discoveries of human reason. but, though christianitie could not in consistencie with the divine perfections have the honor of first reveling it, it seems to have been one principal intention of it, and in this must needs consist

consist one of it's principal excellencies, to confirm our belief of that doctrine, by it's own peculiar discoveries. this is an observation in a very particular manner verified by the information it has given us concerning the dignitie, the office, the agencie and the operations of the Holie Spirit. and if such appears to have been one special view and intention of that very religion we profess, and in which we boast, how peculiarly strong must be the obligation upon us "to look, not at the things, which are seen, and which are temporal, but at the things, which are not seen, and which are eternal?" how highly aggravated will be our guilt, and justly heightened our miserie, if, notwithstanding such clear and ample discoveries made to us in the gospel, both by it's explicit declarations and the general tenor of it's peculiar doctrines, concerning the great realities of an eternal world, we nevertheless allow ourselves to live, to think, to act, to love, to fear, to hope, as if we were citizens only of this below, and had no sort of connexion whatever with any higher or more exalted state of being to come? I would only add farther under this particular, that possibly this very argument, which we have now been deducing, in favor of a future state, from what the scripture teaches us concerning the person and offices of the Holie Spirit, may be one thing meaned by the apostle, when he speaks of the "Holie Spirit of *promise*," and of "the Spirit," as being "the *earnest* of our inheritance."

On the practical and moral uses of
 BOOK III. "inheritance." this at least is a sense, in which,
 as we see, the expression may with great propriety
 be understood.

Once more, sixthly, in the doctrine of the
 Holie Spirit as reveled to us in the scriptures, there
 is an apparent and powerful application made to the
 ingenuous and grateful sentiments of humanitie.
 how eminent and conspicuous the love and friend-
 ship, that was manifested by this glorious being
 even to our sinful race, when in compliance with
 the designation and order of heaven he acted as the
 inspirer, guide and conductor of the apostles in
 disseminating amongst mankind the knowlege of
 the gospel? had it not been for this miraculous
 aid, how soon, alas, had they been silenced by that
 fierce, malignant opposition, which they everie where
 met with from the united powers of the world?
 so that for everie privilege, which in consequence
 of our knowlege and belief of the gospel we en-
 joie, for whatever advantages we have derived from
 it, either relative to our present peace and comfort,
 or conducing to our everlasting welfare, are we not
 indebted for them to the fidelitie of this glorious
 being in executing the office assigned him, as the
 great minister of divine providence in diffusing
 throughout the world the principles of our chri-
 stian faith, when the glad tidings of it first began
 to be made known among the children of men?
 nor was it only upon that particular occasion, that
 this holie, benevolent Spirit interested himself in
 our

our behalf. for "he" moreover intercedeth "for
"us" in the heavenly and eternal world; making
our happiness and salvation the subject of his fer-
vent addresses to the supreme and infinite majestie
of the universe, and by this means in all proba-
bilitie doing public honor to our natures in the
presence of an innumerable companie of the ex-
alted, angelic host. nay, farther still, it is his con-
tinual and incessant employment, according to a
divine constitution and appointment, to be by his
secret invisible influences the cherisher, guardian
and protector of human virtue; that virtue, which
is at once the necessarie and the sure foundation
of the sublimest happiness our natures can pos-
sibly attain to. and is there no obligation of gra-
titude arising from a friendship like this; from
such services as these performed and benefits con-
ferred? is it universally esteemed so monstrous
and unnatural to pass over in a slight contemp-
tuous manner favors bestowed in relation only to
some comparatively low and trifling interest of
this temporal life? and shall a being, who is con-
tinually exerting himself in our behalf with re-
ference to the higher interests of the mind, and to
whom we are indebted for such rich, inestimable
blessings of a spiritual and immortal nature, merit
nothing from us in return? yet how is it in this
case that we can express our gratitude, but by con-
forming ourselves to the genuin and uncorrupted
rules of virtue and religion? were there ever so

many ways of doing it besides, this however must be the best; as we cannot but conclude the observance of these rules to be in the highest degree acceptable to a being, whose distinguishing and appropriate character is that of "the Holie Spirit," and whose very office it is to be the inspirer of virtue in the soul of man. and this perhaps may be a sentiment, which the apostle might intend to urge, when he calls upon us "not to grieve" him. so much however is certain, that, if the joy, that there is among the angels of heaven over a repenting sinner may justly be insisted upon as an argument for repentance, to which purpose it has by our Lord himself been manifestly applied, the acceptableness of our virtuous conduct to the Holie Spirit must needs be a motive for continuing in it, that may with the greatest propriety, and ought with certain success, to be urged upon us, who are under such high, distinguishing obligations to his benevolence and love.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

B O O K

B O O K IV,

C H A P. I.

Of the holie angels.

AMONG the peculiarities of the gospel we CHAP. I. may, I think, very justly reckon the doctrine it exhibits concerning the existence, the orders, the nature, the qualities, the operations and employments of the angelic powers. it is true indeed, that in the heathen world and from the earliest times there was scarce any notion more extensively prevalent, than that of invisible beings superior to man both in eminence of rank and perfection of happiness, inhabiting in countless numbers some part or region of the universe not at present subject to our cognisance or inspection. this was an opinion naturally founded upon their ideas of the divine goodness; the demonstrations of which are by much

too conspicuous in this our globe to permit the apprehension of it's being confined to it alone. but still this is a subject so copious in itself and so naturally suggesting the greatest varietie even of probable imaginations in reference to the particulars of it, that, without some special revelation ascertaining them, the notions we form of it must have been in a great measure conjectural. it is likewise a reflexion very naturally presenting itself on this occasion, that in the books of the old testament there is not any sentiment whatever more current, than that of the existence of several orders of angelical beings. and in these books many things are related concerning their particular agencie and office. but, though the credibilitie of Moses, as an historian, be very sufficiently established even independently of the gospel, it is, I think, chiefly to the declarations of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon that head that we are indebted for our proof of his divine authoritie as a prophet, or teacher in religion. and on this account the knowlege, that we have of the angelic order or class of beings may justly be considered as having it's principal foundation in the gospel, even though several particulars of it had been previously discovered under the dispensation of that renowned legislator. and it must at least, I think, be not an unpleasant or unentertaining exercise of our thoughts to be employing them a while in giving a distinct and more deliberate attention to what has
in

in the scriptures been reveled to us upon this article. but the gospel was far from being intended only for our amusement. not a single discoverie is there that has been made in it, however seemingly remote from the moral discipline, that has not it's practical purposes and moral tendencie, and which must not therefore in proportion increafe and heighten our obligations to cultivate with all possible assiduitie and diligence the habitual temper of virtue. and truly judicious and interesting is that observation of Dr. Scott's, which we have occuring in his Christian Life, Part II. Vol. I. c. i. §. iii. p. 44, 5. that "there is no one *article* in all our religion, " that is matter of mere *speculation*, or that enters " tains our minds with dry and empty notions, " that have no influence on our *wills* and *aff-* " *fections*." nor less worthie of our attention is the sentiment of the same general tenor, which he inculcates, *ibid.* c. ii. p. 72, 3; that "as there is " no dutie in religion but what derives it's *tie* and " *obligation* from some doctrine *contained* in it, so " there is no doctrine in religion, but what *ties* " and *obliges* us to some duty that is *enjoined* in " it." in treating therefore upon the subject of the present chapter I shall observe the same method in general, which I have apprehended most convenient and futable in the illustration of some, that have more immediately preceded. and this will be to inquire into the account, that has been given us in the sacred scriptures; first, of the natural

tural rank and dignitie of these angelic beings ; secondly, of their moral qualities ; thirdly, of their offices and employments ; and then, in the fourth place, point out the application, that is to be made of these severall particulars to the practical views and purposes of religion.

Let us then, first, inquire into the natural rank and dignitie of these angelic beings. and what the scripture has made known to us in reference to this point, seems to be comprised in the following particulars : that they are all of them highly superior to man ; that there is not any one of them that is not vastly inferior to the Holie Spirit, as well as to our Lord Jesus Christ ; and, thirdly, that there are differing degrees of dignitie among themselves.

In the first place ; they are all of them in a very high degree superior to man, even to the most exalted of mankind. we may easily conceive of beings endued both with rationalitie and with moral powers, that may nevertheless be very much inferior in dignitie of nature to the human species. we may likewise not improbably conclude, that there are yet other beings rising but very little above us in the scale of intellectual and moral natures. but the scripture would scarce, I think, countenance us in supposing the angelic spirits to rank in either of these classes. the only expression I recollect, that may seem to intimate any thing of this kind, is that of our Savior's being " made a little lower than " the angels" in consequence of his incarnation.

it is not however said “ a little lower” than this or that particular order of them, but than all. so that the expression, as we have already had occasion to intimate, seems intended to denote some general conformitie of the human nature in it’s dignitie and prerogatives even to that which is angelic. but it is remarkable, that throughout the whole scriptures both of the new testament and of the old the angels, without any instance of exception, are represented as having their original residence and stated habitation in the heavenly world itself; that brightest, most resplendent world, where the divine presence is displayed in a manner infinitely more illustrious than in any other part of universal nature. it is thus particularly that they are characterised by our blessed Savior himself. when speaking of the day of judgment, he says; “ of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not “ the angels, *that are in heaven*, nor the Son, but “ my Father only.” and it is most natural to imagin, that between the original inhabitants of this glorious, heavenly world, the natives of that very place, which is to be the seat of supreme felicitie to all the most exalted beings of the universe throughout the endless ages of eternitie; that between these, I say, and the sojourners upon this earth below, there must be a vast, amazing disparitie, of which perhaps the difference between the most elevated human genius and the most depressed

pressed would be but a very faint and languid similitude.

But, secondly, as the angels are thus highly and eminently exalted in dignitie of nature above the human species, it is alike evident, that they are, even the highest orders of them, vastly inferior both to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Holie Spirit. in the passage just now cited the glorious redeemer is, in language most expresse and determinate, characterised as a being of super-angelic dignitie, as one exalted in rank and eminence of nature far above the most illustrious of all the heavenly hierarchie. and this is a point, which the author of the epistle to the hebrews seems to have been in a particular manner solicitous to establish. at his wonderful incarnation we are there told, that all the angels of God were called upon to “worship him.” of the angels it is there in the language of the old testament observed, that “he maketh his angels spirits and his ministers” of that rank or order “a flame of fire;” but that unto the Son he says, by way of high præ-eminence and distinction; “thy throne, o God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.” again, it is by the writer of this epistle, and in the same context, asked; “unto which of the angels said he at any time; thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee; or unto which of these said he at any time, sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool?”

“ footstool. are not *they* all *ministering* spirits ? ” CHAP. I.

what can be more evident than the general scope and purport of these passages so expressly and in form insisting upon the superior eminence of the Son of God in comparison with the highest orders, with the whole intire class of angelic beings ? and as it appears from the arguments that have upon this subject been advanced in the preceding book, that the Holie Spirit is the very next in dignitie of nature to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the same conclusion is of course established as to the inferioritie even of the highest among the angelic powers to that illustrious being ? besides, though of the angels it is said, that they “ are ministering “ spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall “ be heirs of salvation,” yet is there a ministration of this very kind plainly ascribed in the new testament to the Holie Spirit by way of eminence and high peculiaritie. and as he appears to be thus highly exalted above them in the dignitie of his office, though of a similar nature in general to that ministry, in which they are by the supreme Deitie employed, this seems naturally to intimate, that there was in the original honors of his being a priority of rank.

But, thirdly, as these angelic spirits are all of them so highly superior to the human species, as we have found it to be a yet farther denotation of the angelic natures to be so much inferior in elevation of being both to our Lord Jesus Christ and to

the Holie Spirit, so likewise it appears, that there are differing degrees of natural dignitie and eminence among themselves. thus in the book of Revelation we read of “ the *seven* spirits, that are before the throne of God ;” a manner of expression, that seems evidently to specifie some of the angelic order, that in height and dignitie of nature were eminent beyond the rest. and in this sense we shall, I suppose, be still more inclined to understand it, upon recollecting, that the mention of them is here introduced in connexion with a solemn ascription of praise to our Lord Jesus Christ and acknowledgement of the one supreme and eternal Deitie. “ grace be unto you from him, who
 “ is, and who was, and who is to come, and from
 “ the *seven* spirits, which are before his throne and
 “ from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and
 “ the first-begotten from the dead and the prince
 “ of the kings of the earth : unto him who loved
 “ us, and who washed us from our sins in his
 “ blood, and has made us kings and priests unto
 “ God even his father, to him be glorie and do-
 “ minion for ever, amen.” and when we read concerning our Savior, that he is “ set at the right
 “ hand of the father in heavenly places, far above
 “ all principalitie and power and might and do-
 “ minion, and everie name, that is named, not
 “ only in this world, but also, in that which is to
 “ come ;” together with other descriptions of the like nature occuring, we cannot, I think, but con-
 sider

sider them as denoting some diversitie in point of ^{CHAP. I.} dignitie, rank and order amongst the angelic powers.

But let us now procede to consider, in the second place, their moral qualities. and of these we are every where taught in the scripture to entertain the highest conceptions. in the benevolence of their godlike minds they "shouted for joy" at the creation of our world. and with the same sentiments of love and friendship to our race they joined in a song of praise, when the Son of God appeared among us to redeem it. filled with the same affectionate concern for human happiness they "rejoice over the repenting sinner." nor is the devotion of these heavenly spirits towards the sovereign and infinitely glorious Deitie less conspicuous in the revelations of the scripture than their benevolence and their love to man. we have indeed in this sacred page such sublime descriptions of it as cannot surely but warm and animate our own. what a noble, grand, inspiring view is that given of it by the prophet Isaiah under the form and notion of a vision! "I saw also the Lord
" sitting upon a throne high and lifted up. and
" his train filled the temple. above it stood the
" seraphim. each one had six wings. with twain
" he covered his face, and with twain he covered
" his feet," in token of most profound and humble reverence, "and with twain he did flie" in swiftest execution of heaven's high command;

“ and one cried to another, and said,” in solemn adoration, “ holie, holie, holie is the Lord of “ hosts: the whole earth is full of his glorie.” and of the same kind are some of the august and elevated descriptions given us in the book of Revelation. with what fervent and exalted raptures and in what a thronged host do they mingle with the triumphant saints from earth in the celebration of the divine praises according to that representation in particular, which we have in it’s fifth chapter exhibited! the redemption of our world by the appearance and sufferings of the great Emanuel, is in part the theme of that heavenly song. and by this and other significations given us in the new testament of the peculiar pleasure and satisfaction, which they take in contemplating that fulness of the divine benevolence, that has been displayed in the constitution and scheme of the gospel, we have at once their devotion and the benevolence of their own tempers, particularly their regard and friendship to men, made alike conspicuous and apparent. it is the glorious tidings, the glad and joyful truths, of the gospel-dispensation, that St. Peter refers to, when he says; “ which “ things the *angels* desire,” eagerly and intensely desire “ to look into.” and with the like apprehension undoubtedly concerning the temper and disposition of these heavenly spirits it is, that St. Paul, when speaking in his epistle to the Ephesians, of the first publication of the gospel, expresses

presses himself as follows; “ to the intent, that
“ now unto the principalities and powers in hea-
“ venly places might be known by the church,”
that is, by the constitution of the gospel and it’s
glorious success, “ the manifold wisdom of God,”
displayed in a scheme so admirably contrived for
the salvation of man. when that future state of
glorie and felicitie, which is in the scripture set
before us as the supremely animating object of our
hope, is there described as a state in which we shall
be “ like to the angels of God,” this seems
strongly to implicate some very high degree of moral
purity and excellence, which forms and constitutes
the character of these heavenly spirits. as they
have from the beginning had their stated residence
and habitation in this blessed heavenly world,
where the moral dignity of our own natures is to
be carried to the highest degree of perfection,
we cannot but form a very sublime idea of those
excellencies of the moral kind, which must emi-
nently distinguish theirs. when they are cha-
racterised by that particular term or appellation of
holie angels, this seems directly intended for signi-
fying to us the high pre-eminence of their moral
qualities, according to what has been already ob-
served concerning a still more appropriate use of
it, and in a still sublimer sense. and from the na-
ture of those ministrations and offices, to which
they have been appointed, or in which they are
now actually employed, the same general con-
clusion

conclusion arises; these ministrations and offices being such as are naturally and in a peculiar manner adapted to the disposition and taste of benevolent and friendly, of devout and piously affected spirits.

But this last mentioned particular we proposed, in the third place, more distinctly to illustrate. what may be their offices and employment in the heavenly world itself or in other parts of the great, the boundless universe, we cannot say. that which seems of most importance to us, is the relation they stand in and the offices they exercise with respect to ourselves. and accordingly it is their agency and ministration with respect to mankind, which we find to be in the sacred scripture chiefly insisted upon. and in general the language made use of by the author of the epistle to the hebrews appears sufficiently expressive upon this point. “are they
“not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister
“for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?”

from the historie of the old testament it should seem to be their general office to be employed in acts of benevolence and friendship to mankind. the several illustrations of this remark are by far too numerous to be here specified at large. what I would now more particularly observe, is, that from the account given us in the new we are, I think, very fully authorised to conclude, that these angelic beings are by the supreme providence and direction of heaven stately employed in relation as well to the temporal affairs as to the spiritual

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tual and religious concerns of mankind. when our Savior says of some "little ones," that "their angels always behold the face of his father, who is in heaven," whether we suppose him to speak of infants in age or of those, who being advanced to years of maturitie, retain that innocence and simplicitie of temper, which is the truest ornament even of riper years, he seems plainly enough to have informed us, that some of these heavenly spirits are employed in the guardianship of their persons and as the instruments of their external safetie. and though the infant in age should here be particularly refered to, it is scarce however to be imagined, that a ministration of this sort should be confined to them alone. we may therefore, I think, justly consider this passage as confirming the observation of the psalmist, that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them," and as allowing us to say with him, that God has given his "*angels*" charge over us to keep us in all our ways; and "to bear us up in their hands, lest we dash our foot against a stone." in both these passages indeed the good and virtuous only are spoken of as the objects of this angelic ministry. and the same peculiar reference is observable in the language of the new testament as occurring in that passage once and again alleged out of the epistle to the hebrews. so likewise during our Savior's temptation in the wilderness "*angels*" are said to have "*ministered*" unto

unto him, and when agonising in the garden “an
 “angel” to have “comforted” him. from all which
 it should seem, that their more especial employment
 relative to mankind consists in befriending our moral
 interests, and in promoting the influence of reli-
 gious principles and views upon the temper and af-
 fections. and this supposition admitted, there will
 be a peculiar emphasis apparent in what is said
 concerning their “rejoicing over a repenting sin-
 “ner,” whose repentance must indeed be pecu-
 liarly pleasing and delightful to them, if they
 themselves had been previously endeavoring by their
 kind and friendly agencie to effect it. there is no-
 thing however in the preceding observations, that
 can justly be thought to militate against the notion
 of their sometimes acting according to what is in
 other passages of scripture so evidently implied, or
 rather indeed so expressly affirmed, as the ministers
 of divine vengeance and severitie. this severitie
 being in the divine character itself most perfectly
 consistent even with supreme and infinite benevo-
 lence, nay only exercised in subserviencie to some
 gracious purposes in the divine universal government,
 it can never surely be incompatible with the bene-
 volence of these angelic spirits to be employed in
 the execution of it.

But having thus considered the natural dignitie,
 the moral qualities, the offices and employment of
 these heavenly beings, I would now go on to the
 fourth general topic proposed, which was to shew
 the

the application, that is to be made of these several particulars to the practical views and purposes of religion. CHAP. I.

And here it is to be observed, in the first place, that the scripture-doctrine concerning these angelic spirits is very happily conspiring with some other of it's peculiar principles already treated of and in this particular view insisted on, to raise and exalt our conceptions of the divine greatness and majestie, and to impress upon our minds a just and becoming sense of them. sublimely glorious as they are in the dignitie of their natures and in rank and order of spiritual existencies, yet do they, as we have seen, "veil their faces" in the presence of the eternal, holie one, and in token of that deepest, humblest adoration, with which they stand before it. though they "excel in strength," yet "his commandment" they execute with absolute submission, "hearkening to his word," his all-controlling word, in profoundest and most reverential awe. even to the most eminent and illustrious of these exalted spirits it is the voice of this sovereign Deitie, "come, and he cometh:". "do this, "and he doeth it." shall we then in comparison with these high and elevated natures, so frail, diminutive and abject, think ourselves at libertie for the sake of gratifying whatever sordid appetite, to violate his laws? shall we dispute his will? or shall we dare to trifle in his presence?

Of the holie angels.

But, secondly, in the doctrine of angels as delivered by the sacred writers, we have the most pleasing illustration given us of the divine goodness, an accessionarie and ample proof of it. it is from this indeed, from it's absolute perfection, it's spotless nature, it's infinite exuberance, that the peerless majestie of the sovereign being is derived; which therefore to affront must needs be the vilest ingratitude, as well as most egregious folly and palpable contradiction to every genuin sentiment of self-love. and of this divine and sovereign benevolence how conspicuous the demonstration, how direct the evidence arising even from that very brief account we have been giving of these angelic natures? the stated occupation, if we may be allowed the language, in which under the direction and by the appointment of the eternal mind these heavenly spirits are engaged, is a ministry of love. how vast too must be the sum, the intire aggregate of that sublime, elevated and godlike happiness, that happiness absolutely pure and unmixed, permanent and undecaying, that has been enjoyed by everie individual of everie class belonging to this glorious hierarchie throughout unnumbered ages past, and which is to be for ever increasing! what a fair and amiable, what a large and boundless idea is it that we may from hence derive of that goodness, which presides in nature, which directs and governs all! and for the solution of certain phænomena, that have sometimes been insisted upon

upon as seemingly repugnant to it, this very theorie of angelic spirits with other similar considerations has been very well and closely applied by Mr. Baxter, in that most excellent and highly valuable treatise, his Reasons of the Christian Religion, Part I. c. xi. p. 100, 1. though not indeed with all the exactness of philosophic phrase. “and lastly,” says he, for so runs the passage I refer to, “as for
“all the objections from sin and miserie against
“God’s goodness I answer you with those questions.
“do you know what number the holy and glorious angels are, in comparison both of wicked
“men and devils? whether they may not be ten
“thousand to one? do you know how many thousand fixed stars there are, besides planets? do
“you know, whether they are all suns? and how
“much bigger they are than the earth? and how
“much more glorious? do you know, whether
“they are all inhabited or not? (when you see almost no place on earth uninhabited, not so much
“as water and air) do you know, whether those
“thousands of more glorious orbs have not inhabitants answerable to their greatness and glory,
“beyond the inhabitants of this darker orb? do
“you know, whether sin and sorrow be not kept
“out there and confined to this, and some few such
“obscure receptacles? do you know the degrees of
“holiness and glory, which those superior inhabitants possess? and do you know, that all these
“things set together, the demonstration of God’s

“goodness by the way of beneficence is not ten
 “thousand times beyond the demonstrations of it
 “in the way of justice, and all the other sorrows
 “that you complain of? till you know all these,
 “do not think yourselves meet from your sensible
 “troubles to argue against that infinite goodness,
 “which demonstrateth itself so unquestionably to
 “all, by all the goodness of the whole creation?”
 and besides all this, what can more directly tend
 to heighten our ideas of the divine goodness as ex-
 exercised towards ourselves, and in the present life, to
 awaken a more distinct perception of it, or render it
 more deeply impressive upon the affections than the
 consideration of this angelic ministrie appointed in
 our behalf and continually employed in executing it’s
 gracious purposes? of which I think we need no
 other proof than to hear how sweetly upon this
 very topic our matchless Spenser sings.

I.

And is there care in heaven? and is there love
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures bace,
 That may compassion of their evils move?

There is: else much more wretched were the
 cace

Of men than beasts. but o! the exceeding grace
 Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,
 And all his workes with mercy doth embrace,
 That blessed angels he sends to and fro
 To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe!

II.

Of the holie angels.

II.

415
CHAP. I.

How oft do they their silver bowres leave
To come to succour us, that succour want?
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul feedes to ayd us militant?
They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward;
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
O why should heavenly God to men have such regard!
Faerie Queene, Book II. Canto viii.

Again, thirdly, the doctrine of angels as laid down in the scriptures is naturally adapted in concurrence with other peculiarities of the gospel to give us an high and honorable opinion of the dignitie and essential glories of human nature. notwithstanding all the præ-eminence of their rank, notwithstanding that transcendent elevation of being which they possess, yet are they by the appointment and order of the sovereign Deitie ministering spirits to mankind. and what discoverie could have more plainly signified to us that reverence, which is due from ourselves to our own being, to our own intellectual and moral natures, and the importance of that temper, with which we shall be demeaning ourselves even here on earth? is it likely, that such illustrious beings should be employed in so friendly a ministration towards us, during our pilgrimage in this world, had we after all been born into it
only

only that we might trifle through it, or were capable of nothing more? and when there are so many of the doctrines of the christian revelation thus concurring, as we have seen, in pointing out one and the same principle to our attention, can we believe it to have been otherwise than with this particular design of enforcing upon us more effectually a sense of it's importance?

Fourthly, the scripture-doctrine concerning these heavenly spirits, which we have been endeavoring to illustrate, carries in it a strong dissuasive from vice, and is a natural check upon the licentiousness of appetite and inclination, on account of their presence with us in the execution of that guardian office they sustain. angels are not the fictions of fancie or creatures of imagination, but, if there be any truth in the scripture, really existing natures; and great numbers of them are continually present with us, as truly as we are with one another. they are likewise *holie* angels. and if the presence of some holie, heavenly, godlike man would naturally strike us into reverential awe, and a fear of offending him by any moral indecencies of behavior; ought not the presence of these angelic spirits to have the like effect upon us? this use of the doctrine has been expressly insisted upon by St. Paul with respect to the conduct of the female sex in one particular branch of their religious concerns and moral dutie. for so it appears we shall most naturally understand the passage, that a woman in
a place

a place of religious worship ought to have a "veil" CHAP. I.
"on her face because of the angels;" that is to
demean herself with all possible seriousness, so-
lemnitie and modestie on account of the presence
of these heavenly spirits. and it is easie to see,
that the argument might with equal propriety have
been applied to any other particular branch of
dutie incumbent upon mankind in general. and
if, as the scriptures teach, they are continually em-
ployed in a ministration of love and friendship to
our race, what can we do less in return for their
faithful services, than to be continually performing
those offices of love and charitie towards one ano-
ther, and of pietie and devotion towards the so-
vereign mind, which we cannot but believe must
be in us the most highly pleasing and acceptable
object of their contemplation?

But this naturally leads us to observe yet farther,
and in the fifth place, that the account given us in
the scripture concerning the moral qualities and ex-
cellencies of these angelic beings must needs have
in it all the force of a most lovely and venerable
example. it is spoken of as our privilege, that we
shall be like them hereafter. and it cannot surely
but be our dutie, that we should resemble them
now. and how indeed can we think of their be-
ing continually employed in acts of friendship and
good-will to man, in promoting our health, our
peace, our safety, our virtue, and not admire these
amiable qualities? or how reflect upon that fervent
zeal,

zeal, with which they execute the orders of the sovereign mind, their prostrate adorations before his throne, the extatic raptures, with which they celebrate his praise, without being conscious of some rising ambition in our souls, some noble elevation of spirit prompting us to rival them, as nearly as possible, in the ardor of their devotion and the constancie of their obedience? a very entertaining varietie of particulars illustrating, in connexion with certain conclusions there founded upon them, the general scope and tenor of these reflexions as well as some other sentiments already insisted upon in this chapter, may be seen in Mr. Baxter's Dying Thoughts, Appendix, p. 272, 3.

But yet farther, sixthly, from the doctrine of angels as delivered to us in the system of christianitie we may derive an additional argument strongly enforcing everie other of the kind, in proof of the absolute necessitie of the virtuous and holie temper in order to our being qualified for participating in the blessings of eternitie. it is a point particularly insisted upon in sacred writ, that in the companie of these holie and sublimely virtuous spirits it is that we are to enjoy them. but how can we be qualified for being their associates, if corrupt and unholie affections are predominating in our own minds? with what scorn and indignation must they even now behold us forming any such absurd, delusive hopes!

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In the last place, the information that has been given us by the scriptures concerning these heavenly beings, carries in it a most alarming lesson of humilitie and religious fear. what numbers of them, notwithstanding all the exalted dignitie of their original characters, “*fell* from their first estate,” and fell into “the same condemnation” with their grand leader, that first apostate, the devil! undoubtedly then there must be the utmost reason for addressing, even to those amongst mankind of the most firm established virtue, that so solemn admonition of the apostles; “let him that thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” but it is concerning these rebellious and apostate angels, that we are more distinctly to treat in the following chapter.

C H A P. II.

Of the fallen angels.

BOOK IV.

HOW moral evil came into this world of ours, has for ages past been looked upon as one of the most perplexing and intricate questions that can possibly occur to the thoughts, or employ the inquirie, of mankind. but how it came into heaven seems, I think, to be a greater difficultie still. for the existence of it among ourselves, some have accounted by recuring to the agencie and subtile contrivances of the devil. but there was no devil to tempt the devil himself. and when we recollect the original perfection of nature belonging to those apostate spirits, who are now “ reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day,” so far superior to any that were possessed by man even in all the primitive glories of his being, it must needs appear a much greater subject of admiration, that any of these should have fallen from their allegiance to the sovereign, eternal mind, than that this should have been the case with respect to him. yet fall they did ; and, as it should seem from the sacred scriptures,

tures, in vast amazing numbers. and from hence there is one obvious reflexion to be deduced with respect to the introduction and the prevalence of moral evil among the human kind. and that is, that we cannot at least be under any necessitie of having recourse either to the seduction of the devil in accounting for the first offence, or to the corruption of the human nature by it for the sin that has so much abounded since. for, if these angelic spirits sinned without either devil to seduce, or an originally vitious and corrupted nature to incline them, can it be at all more surprizing; must it not in proportion to the superior dignitie of their natures be the less so, that any of the human race should do the like? for the same reason the supposition of a præ-existent state, in order to solve the moral appearances of the present, seems altogether superfluous. though it must be owned, that on admitting the doctrine of a depraved and corrupted nature brought into the world with us, this notion will best account for it. and in this view the sentiment has been of late with great vivacitie insisted upon by Mr. Berrow. it is not however my intention here to enter upon the speculative discussion of either of these difficulties. the more immediately moral view of those discoveries, that have been made to us concerning the fallen angels, is what I design in this chapter more distinctly to treat of. and in doing it I shall observe the following method.

First, I shall exhibit the account as given us in the scriptures of their original defection or apostasie.

Secondly, inquire into their present character and situation.

And then, in the third place, point out those useful reflexions, that appear naturally to result from the two preceding particulars.

We will, I say, first, exhibit the account, that has been given us in the scriptures relative to the original defection or apostasie of these once heavenly, but now infernal, spirits. and so far as I am able to discern, there are only three particular sins expressly ascribed to them in the sacred writings, as constituting the guilt of this their first transgression. and these are pride, lying and murther. in this view the first-mentioned of these seems to have been directly insisted upon by St. Paul. who, when speaking of the christian bishop and describing the proper qualifications for such an office, enjoins, that he, who undertakes it, should “not be a novice;” “lest being lifted up with *pride*, he fall into the “condemnation of the *devil*.” that is, lest he fall into the very same crime, for which it was, that even the devil himself incurred the damnation of hell. in relation to the next particular, that of lying, our Savior himself assures us, that this grand apostate “from the begining abode not in the “truth.” falshood and lying, as I suppose our Savior’s meaning to be, entered into the nature, and constituted

constituted a part, of his original lapse or first defection. and he being likewise the first, that ever did apostatise, he is on both these accounts in conjunction, and in the immediately following words of the passage I refer to, said to be the “father of lying.” it is in the very same passage too we are informed by our Savior, that the devil was “a murderer from the beginning;” or in other words, and according to the interpretation just now assigned, this also was one of the crimes, into which he fell at the first renunciation of his allegiance to the sovereign and eternal majesty of heaven. in the consideration therefore of these three particulars, together with the enormous aggravations, which attended this complicated guilt in the case of these rebelling angels, will consist the proper illustration of this our first proposed topic. to begin then with the sin styled by the apostle in the sense, that has just now been given, so full to our present purpose, “the condemnation of the devil;” the sin of pride. whenever this inordinate affection possesses any human breast we well know, that in proportion to the power and influence of the man, who indulges it, it’s never-failing effect is to disturb and violate the order of society, producing the most unnatural feuds, factions and animosities, and prompting to every act of outrage and violence, however contrarie either to the sentiments of religion, the suggestions of humanity, or the dictates of justice, towards those, who may happen to in-

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interfere with his aspiring views. seldom does it fail of being accompanied with a malignant spirit of envie, disposing the unhappie person laboring under the influence of this baleful passion to look with a repining and fretful eye upon everie degree of happiness, which he either sees or imagines to be enjoyed by any of his fellow-creatures, whatever may be their outward condition and rank of life. for superiors are far from being the only objects of envie. the man, who has once given way to it, can see happiness enough to make him sufficiently uneasie, even in the case of those, whom on account of the inferioritie of their outward circumstances he may at the same time be looking upon with the utmost disdain. in that dissatisfaction with our present situation, which enters into the very idea or notion of pride, is necessarily implied ingratitude towards our supreme benefactor, whose appointment has placed us in it. it is repugnancie and rebellion of will, against the order of his government. it is opposing ourselves even to the measures of unerring wisdom operating in subserviencie to the views of infinite benevolence. it is a vain and insolent attempt to dispute the rights of soveriegnitie even with the almightie himself. such is the sin of pride among human creatures. and such must necessarily be the nature and general properties of it among all intelligent and moral agents whatsoever. such therefore must of course have been the complicated guilt; the malevolence
and

and impietie of the rebel-angels in their first revolt. but then, secondly, in this their original defection was included, not only pride in all it's forms, and as we may well presume from what we have in the sacred page related concerning the character of these apostate, in it's highest degree of malignitie, but also lying. the scripture speaks once and again of the devil and his angels. this mode of expression seems plainly enough to intimate, that there was some one of this angelic order, who first formed, in that spirit of pride, envie and impietie, of which we have been speaking, some horridly turbulent and blasphemous design, and then endeavored by stratagem and wiles to bring over others to a concurrence in it. this he would do for the sake of putting it more readily in execution; perhaps too, as is common amongst ourselves, with the hope of lessening his own guilt by involving as many accomplices as possible in the same, and in the view of obtaining more easily by this means the pardon of it. nay, his envie alone would strongly instigate him to seduce as many as he could, into a compliance with his detestable and so enormously flagitious project; there being nothing, with which this diabolic passion as prevailing amongst human kind is so much gratified and delighted, if delight can indeed belong to it, as the sins and follies of others. it is a passion inclining men to triumph in the iniquities of any around them, at the same time, that out of an insolence
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of spirit boldly daring to bid defiance even to heaven itself, they are glorying in their own. in such direct contrarietie does it stand to that affection of charitie, which according to the apostle's description of it "rejoices not in iniquitie," but weeps over and laments it. nay, it will even prompt those, in whom it operates, either to persuade or to inveigle, or if possible, to force another, especially, if that other be a person of some considerable reputation for integritie and upright manners, into sin, on purpose that they may have the malignant pleasure of saying; how is he fallen! and there is no doubt to be made, but that in this manner it would operate in the model and "father" of it, the devil. on all these accounts we can little wonder at it's being said of him, that "from the beginning he abode not in the truth." it is natural to suppose, that in the first modeling of his project he put all his subtletie to work in contriving everie mode of dissimulation, craft, lying and hypocrisie, by which to seduce as great a number as possible of the heavenly spirits from their allegiance to the throne of the great eternal. nor can any thing be more probable, than that as he gained adherents, this lying spirit would diffuse itself among them, and become at length one general characteristic of this fatal apostasie. but, thirdly, we are by our Savior himself, as we have seen, informed, that the devil was not only a liar, but "a murderer from the beginning." and by this assertion we

we have already supposed him to mean, that this was one of the crimes, which made a part of his original defection from that obedience eternally due to the supreme Lord and ruler of the universe. murder there was even in heaven itself, that world of immortal spirits, when this grand apostasie commenced. in the christian interpretation he amongst mankind, "who loveth not his brother," who is not animated towards him by this sincere and fervent principle of christian charitie, "is a murderer." See our Sermons on Public Occasions, No. XIV. the want of this affection, of benevolence, or of love towards his kindred spirits, nay a very great and horrid contrarietie to it we have already seen to have been necessarily involved in those other sins of pride and envie, of falsehood, treachery and deceit, which were all contributing to this first transgression of the devil; the first, so far as we know, that was ever committed in the moral universe. in a sense however still more nearly approaching to the literal, and in a sense too inexpressibly heightening the guilt, is it affirmed concerning this grand apostate, that he was "a murderer from the beginning." sin, by whatever moral agent indulged is in the most dreadful implication of that term his death, the perversion of his powers, the corruption and disorder of his affections, the forfeiture of his happiness. and it is on these accounts, that those amongst mankind, whose minds are under the prevailing influence of it, are said to be

be "*dead* in trespasses and sins." well then may the leading rebel among the revolted spirits of heaven be spoken of as being "a murderer" at the period, when that revolt took place, it being through his artifice and treacherie, at least as one principally promoting cause, that such an amazing number of them were actually seduced, seduced into sin, expelled the regions of bliss; and as our great poet expresses it,

" Hurl'd headlong from the ætherial skie,
 " With hideous ruin and combustion down
 " To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
 " In adamantine chains and penal fire."

and agreeably to what was observed under the preceding particular, there is little doubt to be made, but that this crime, far from being confined to their grand leader, was in one degree or other common to them all. such then were the crimes, and this the complicated guilt of these rebel-angels in their first and general apostasie.

Let us go on to consider, in the fourth place, and for the yet farther illustration of the present topic, the aggravations, the dreadfully horrid aggravations, that accompanied it. and first, these revolted spirits were of highest rank and dignitie, both in intellectual and moral nature. they were by virtue of the original and primitive excellencies of their being far from having with any color of plausibilitie to urge either the plea of ignorance or that of frailtie. again; in consequence of these peculiarly

peculiarly great, these most eminent and illustrious honors of their being, which so far exalted them above everie other class of rational and intellectual natures, they were proportionably under greater obligations arising from an ingenuous gratitude, to have maintained their allegiance to the sovereign of the universe firm and inviolable. and the ingratitude of an angel towards that divine being, who made him so, would perhaps of itself alone and separately from all other considerations of whatever kind amount to and involve in it an inexpressibly greater degree of moral guilt, than that of which any human modes, circumstances, habits or aggravations of it can by any means give us the least idea. besides, we may perhaps not improbably presume, that these very beings thus renouncing their fidelitie and obedience to the supreme Lord and governor of the universe had been for a succession of millions of millions of ages paying an absolutely sinless homage to him. and that beings, after having maintained the integritie and perfection of their natures through such a vast amazing track of duration, should at length apostatise, must needs implie such an atrociousness of guilt, as all the most emphatical terms denoting that idea collected out of all the languages, that have ever been spoken in the world and formed into one aggravating, dreadful and enormously sounding epithet, would but very faintly express. besides, considering the infinite mercie of that sovereign

deitie, againſt whom they had offended, we cannot but ſuppoſe, that upon their firſt revolt offers of pardon and reconciliation were made to them on condition of their return to ſentiments of dutie and obedience. and could ſuch beings as theſe, who had been for ſo many ages celebrating and adoring the richneſs of the divine goodneſs, and that with the cleareſt and moſt exalted ideas of it's beautie and of it's perfection, thus ſpurn at length upon it's gracious propoſals without contracting ſuch a degree of guilt, as muſt fill everie rational and morally diſcerning ſpirit in the univerſe on the cogniſance of it, however exalted, the ſupreme, omniſcient being alone excepted, to whom nothing is new, nothing ſtrange, but all things from eternitie moſt intimately known, with the deepeſt wonder and aſtoniſhment? and then, in the laſt place, as ſo many of the angelic ſpirits were in fact ſeduced by the deluſion and cunning of the grand leader in this apoſtaſie, we cannot but ſuppoſe, that there muſt have been the poſſibilitie at leaſt, that a much greater number of them, nay the whole angelic order itſelf, might have been concurring in it. nor was it, we may be ſure, owing to any want of malice or envie in this arch-revolter, that the whole heavenly hierarchie did not become apoſtate. what guilt then, what heinous, aggravated, inexpressible guilt muſt it have been in him and his principal confederates, to ſet on foot a deſign thus calculated in it's nature and tendencie and in the poſſibilitie
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of things to extirpate all the exalted virtue, all the sublime and fervent devotion, all the rapturous, extatic, elevated happiness even of heaven itself! by such reflexions as these we may be enabled perhaps to form some general, though it must be at best but an inadequate and comparatively slight, idea, of the guilt incurred, when this defection took place in heaven. any thing more determinate in relation to it I am not warranted from the scriptures to specify. in what particular overt act their crime consisted, or whether in any; whether it was not wholly confined to the perverse inclination of their will, not less perfectly discernable to the sovereign mind in its inmost secrecies, than by the most outrageous acts of rebellion, it is not for us to say. I cannot however but concur in that modest censure, that has been passed upon supposing them capable of forming any such design, as that, which seems to have been imputed to them by our great poet referred to above. to think in the literal sense of that language, if this was indeed the poet's, of deposing the great monarch of the universe, and of disputing with him the empire of nature, is an absurditie too gross to consist even with the lowest degree of rationalitie, much more to have been admitted by beings so eminent and superior in the scale of intellectual natures.

But having thus briefly stated, what I suppose to be the true, that is, the scriptural account of their original apostasie, and pointed out the particular

crimes in which it consisted, together with the several horrid aggravations attending them, let us now go on to inquire into the present situation and character of these revolted spirits.

And, first, it seems evident from the scriptures, that their original powers of understanding and reason do still remain to a very considerable degree unimpaired. far indeed must they now be from possessing them in all their native puritie, strength and elevation. for sin of every kind, and by whatever individual of any particular class or order of beings committed, naturally debilitates and depraves the understanding, as well as corrupts the moral sentiment or affection. and in this very particular must needs consist one considerable part of the punishment incurred by this grand apostate together with his confederates in revolt. he is sunk and degraded, as we may well presume, in his intellectual faculties far beneath even the lowest of those belonging to the angelic order, who have retained their integritie, though in his original state of innocence he might perhaps have stood among the foremost even of that exalted class of beings on account of the peculiarly sublime and elevated degree, in which he possessed these very faculties. mortifying indeed must this be to such a proud and insolent nature as was his. but still, though thus fallen and degraded even as an intellectual being, it is, I think plainly enough intimated in the scripture-page, that he is yet retaining a degree of knowlege

knowledge and intellectual abilities, vastly superior to what of this kind is possessed by the human species. there we read of the "devices" of the devil, of the "snares" of the devil and the "wiles" of the devil. all which expressions seem naturally to imply the acuteness and subtlety of his understanding. and on this very account, and as acting with the assistance and by the instrumentality of those other infernal spirits styled "his angels," he is spoken of as being the grand enemy and capital opposer of human virtue and human happiness.

For, in the second place, it appears from the scriptures, that these fallen spirits do not only retain in some very considerable degree their original powers of wisdom, intelligence and knowledge, but that they have also a certain scene of action allowed them in the moral universe. in this world of ours at least "the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." and his power of doing this was very remarkably exemplified at the time of our blessed Savior's being upon earth, and in the case of those terrifying madmen, who by his agency had become such. it has been a question with some how it came to pass, that demoniacal possessions should never, or at least so very rarely, have happened, excepting in the time of our Savior. and the difficulty implied in this question has been thought so great, that in order to solve it some have denied the reality

ality of them. if I may here be allowed a conjecture it should be as follows. that apostate fallen spirit the devil well knew, that nothing could be more contrarie to his own malicious intentions relative to mankind, or more directly tend to defeat them, than the establishment of christianitie in the world. and the agitating and tormenting after the manner described in the gospel-historie so many of the human species at the very time of it's first publication and in the very countrie where it began to be preached, seems to have been a stratagem formed by this apostate and malicious spirit for preventing the reception of it. it was his expectation, no doubt, that these possessions would be imputed to some malignant influence attending our Savior's appearance upon earth. and so undoubtedly they would, had not our Savior himself been the dispossessor; had not the providence of the almighty ruler of the world in removing these fearful maladies by the hand of that very person whose designs they were intended to defeat, so effectually obviated an objection, that otherwise might have proved an insuperable bar to it's success.

After what has been already said we need not enlarge upon an observation, which however for order's sake, it may be proper just to mention. the observation I mean is, that, as the devils still retain so considerable a degree of their capacity for reasoning and knowlege, and of those intellectual powers, which belonged to their first estate and
primitive

primitive natures, so likewise since their first apostasie they retain all the same malignitie, pride, envie and impietie of character, in which it consisted, and by which it's complicated guilt was formed. this is necessarily implied in what the scripture, as we have seen, declares concerning the purposes, to which within the sphere of activitie allowed them these intellectual powers are exerted. and we may not improbably suppose them to be animated in their malignitie and spite against the human kind, by a spirit of revenge towards that almightie Being, whose will and authoritie they had in vain resisted, and by whose sovereign arm they were driven from their once happie seats above into those regions of darkness, horror and consternation they now inhabit. some perhaps may be ready to inquire how it can be thought consistent with the perfections of the sovereign deitie to permit an agencie like this to be perpetually carried on against the virtue and happiness of mankind. in general answer to which difficultie, what we have to observe, in

The fourth place, may perhaps be sufficient; that these infernal spirits, namely, knowing and malignant as they are, have not the least degree of independent power. they are according to the express doctrine and language of the scriptures "held in chains," the chains of the almightie. so that, whatever may be their spite and malice, how great soever their subtletie and cunning, no

more is it that they can do, even the arch-apostate himself, towards obstructing the designs of deitie, or the measures of divine benevolence, than the smallest insect upon earth, or even the most diminutive sand upon the sea-shore. he is as absolutely under the divine controule as these; and the power he is possessed of no more than what it is perfectly consistent with every purpose of heaven's love and mercie to allow him.

And so much must needs be evident from what we may, in the fifth place, observe under this head, and which is in scripture likewise expressly insisted upon; and that is, that he is now suffering the most dreadful punishment heightened by the apprehension of the still-continued vengeance of the almightie to be poured out upon him. "he hath," says St. Jude, speaking of these apostate, "reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

But having thus considered the scriptural account both of the original apostasie of the fallen angels and of their present character and situation, let us go on to the third thing proposed, which was to point out those practical and moral uses it is adapted to subserve. that most excellent and highly important lesson of caution and religious fear, which is to be collected from the fall of such numbers even of the angelic host, has been briefly touched upon in the preceding chapter. we may therefore now go on to observe still farther with respect to
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those morally instructive purposes, to which the doctrine of scripture upon this head is to be applied, as follows. CHAP. II.

In the first place, a character so deeply malignant, so horridly detestable, as that of the fallen angels, exhibited to our view in the sacred, standing records of that very religion, which we embrace under the sanction of the most venerable authority, is very powerfully adapted for exciting in our minds a most convincing and lively sense of the deformity and odiousness of sin. this effect it has for the same general reason, which renders a perfect model or example of virtue delineated in real life and manners so peculiarly well fitted to quicken and animate our sense of its loveliness and beauty. it is impossible seriously and deliberately to recollect the diabolic character according to the several particulars of it exhibited in the scriptures, and not to look upon it with the utmost horror and aversion. and what is the natural and immediate inference; but that, if we have the least concern about our own we must be keeping ourselves at the remotest distance from the likeness of it? what, but that so far as we do by our own prevailing temper in fact resemble it, we ourselves must of necessity be the objects of abhorrence and detestation to all the pure and virtuous spirits, that can take cognisance of it; but most of all, to that supreme, eternal mind, whose aversion to our characters cannot but be our highest disgrace and in-

famie, as his approbation and favor is the greatest honor, that it is possible for the most exalted spirits in the universe to attain to.

“ Oh, says the divine Herbert, that I could
“ a sin once see !

— — — — —
 “ But God more care of us has had : }
 “ If apparitions make us sad, }
 “ By sight of sin we should go mad. }
 “ Yet as in sleep we see foul death and live ;
 “ So devils are our sins in perspective.”

But the doctrine contained in scripture with relation to these degenerate spirits is not only thus highly useful towards impressing upon our minds a proper and effectual sense of the odiousness and deformitie of sin in general. it is likewise, in the second place, very aptly accommodated for giving us right notions as to the turpitude of particular vices, and of the different degrees of malignitie belonging to the several different characters, that are to be met with amongst mankind. certainly those vices cannot be of the least offensive nature, which approach the nearest of all to those very crimes, in which consisted the first apostasie of these rebellious angels, to which they still adhere in their present state of degradation and abasement, and of which the scripture everie where makes mention, as being in the highest possible degree horrid and atrocious. and what are they? why according to the scripture-account the catalogue of
 them

them is this. pride, envie, ingratitude, falshood, lying and murder. and of this last, as we have seen, everie one in the sence and judgment of christianitie is guiltie, who acts with ill-meaning and bad affection towards any of his fellow-creatures, even though he should never have entertained the most distant thought of making any attempt upon their lives. in every such case there is the very same temper of enmitie towards our kind implied, as constitutes in a more aggravated degree the guilt of the murtherer. nay, oftentimes such bad affections producing a long-continued series of ill usage, may by it's consequences and the deep impressions made by it terminate even in the death of him, who is the object of it. so that a man may be legally convicted of murder at the bar of heaven, of murder in the strictest sence, whom we should little think of summoning before any human tribunal on that account. but, besides the crimes of their first apostasie still persisted in, there is another imputed to them in their present state of degeneracie and most dreadfully aggravating the guilt and malignitie of it. and that is calumnie and slander. this is the strict and proper meaning of the very name usually given to the devil in the original language of the new testament; it being the very same word, that is elsewhere used to denote slanderers of the human kind. and as he is thus denominated from this particular species of guilt, this shews how prevalent it is in those infernal

BOOK IV. fernal regions he inhabits. at the same time it strongly intimates to us it's peculiar baseness and malignitie. the most odious and detestable being in the universe derives his name from it. he and his confederate fallen, as we may, I suppose, justly enough presume from the scripture representation upon this head, are continually endeavoring to assuage their pain and miserie, and to satiate, if possible, their spite and malice, by recounting such of the follies and imperfections of mankind as come within the compass of their knowlege, in aspersing the most venerable characters, that have ever appeared upon the theatre of our world, and perhaps in vilifying and calumniating the innocence and puritie of those exalted spirits dwelling in that heavenly one, of which they themselves were once inhabitants. such is the conversation of hell; and so exactly similar to that, which is of all others the most pleasing to numbers upon earth. but it is remarkable, that amidst all this malignitie of character the devil can "transform himself into an angel of light." so little dependance is there to be had on the outward appearances of sanctitie, and so easie a matter is it to cover over one continued series of base ingratitude, of the most inhuman cruelty, of the deepest rancor, revenge and malice, under the mask of wonderful tenderness and most endearing love. so consistent our most deliberate opposition even to the best intended and most wisely adapted measures of others, after the
the

the manner of the devil himself, with pretensions of the highest affection even to the very persons, who are carrying them on. so perfectly reconcilable in real life and manners, notwithstanding it's gross and shameful contrariety in morals, the caressing and flattery of those, when present, whom absent we can with the greatest pleasure, if pleasure can indeed belong to a temper so malignant, calumniate and revile. let me conclude our reflexions upon this particular with observing, that there is something peculiarly well adapted in that brand of infamy, which is fixed in the scriptures upon the several vices, which we have now been speaking of, by informing us, that they constitute the character of the infernal spirits themselves, towards giving us the proper idea of their malignity and baseness, as they are the very offences, which amongst mankind are apt to be the most gently treated. many of them human laws cannot reach. to most of them human censure is very favorable. and with the complication of all in his own real character, a man may pass through life with reputation.

But, thirdly, in what the scripture has revealed to us concerning the fallen angels, there is an additional force and efficacy given to every dissuasion from vice arising from the punishment to be hereafter inflicted upon those, who shall with obstinate impenitency persevere in the practice of it. the certainty of this punishment is by these discoveries strongly

strongly confirmed. for nothing surely can be more evident, than that, if the attributes of the supreme being and the honor of his government could not admit of the continuance of these spirits even in their "first estate" and original habitation, after they had corrupted their natures by sin and follie, the same attributes, the same inviolable honors of the divine government can never admit of his receiving us to the joys of that blessed world, whilst any corrupt and sinful affection is allowed to predominate in our souls. at the same time it must give us a very dreadful idea of these punishments in the nature of them, to think of being associated in this world of torments with none but these accursed spirits. whose revilings, scoffs and insults will most terribly aggravate all our pains, should that wretched state, which heaven avert, ever prove to be our lot. and this especially as we shall then have to dwell upon the reflexion, that had not the fault intirely been our own we might have been enjoying so much better companie.

Once more, it must surely deserve our most serious recollection, that the apostate spirits, notwithstanding their stupendous fall from the most exalted heights of heaven, it may be, to the very lowest state of wretchedness and disgrace, do yet retain in some measure their distinguished powers of understanding, and are allowed a considerably extended sphere of action, in which to be exerting them. of what little value then that worldly power,

power, which we may possess to the full, and yet be "the children of the devil" by the resemblance of our temper and affections to his malignant character; and consequently the objects of divine hatred and displeasure! how little confidence to be placed upon any illuminations of the understanding as a means of recommending us to the divine approbation? all the knowledge, all the faith even of an angel could not, as we see, prevent the expulsion of numbers belonging to that exalted order, when once they became in temper and moral affection corrupt. and these we find to be in a very considerable measure retained by those fallen ones, though reserved in "chains of darkness and horror" "to the judgment of the great day." "thou believest, that there is one God." but what of that? "the devils also believe and tremble."

C H A P. III.

*On the peculiar discoveries of the gospel relative to
a future state.*

BOOK IV.

WHEN treating in the first chapter of our first book upon those discoveries relative to the religious and moral interests of mankind that had been originally made by the light of nature and reason, we endeavored to shew, that the proof of a future state in general, in which the righteous are to be made completely and to all eternitie happy, and those, who quit the present life with depraved and vitious dispositions, doomed to inexpressible miserie and woe, was upon this primarie foundation not only very cogent and convincing but likewise extremely obvious and apparent. in consequence of which it came to be in fact the general belief of mankind in the heathen world. and this previous knowlege of it is what the scriptures themselves of the new testament seem very plainly to suppose. let any one only attend to the manner in which our Savior speaks upon this subject ; and it must, I think, be undeniably apparent, that he inculcated this doctrine, not as a new,
unheard

unheard of principle then first published to the world, but as a sentiment familiar to the minds of those, to whom he was addressing himself, and which it was one principal design of his office as the prophet of the most high God to awaken, cherish and improve. thus, when directing his discourse to a surrounding *multitude* he pronounces “the poor in spirit to be blessed,” because their’s is “the kingdom of heaven, when he declares “those to be blessed, who are persecuted for “righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of “heaven;” when he calls upon them to “re- “joice and be exceeding glad, for great is your “reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the “prophets, that were before you,” when in the same discourse he exhorts his hearers not to “lay “up for themselves treasures upon earth, where “moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves “break through and steal; but to lay up for “themselves treasures in heaven, where neither “moth nor rust do corrupt, and where thieves do “not break through and steal;” is this the language, this the style or manner of one, who was speaking to them upon a subject of the highest possible moment and importance, but, which however they themselves had till then been wholly unacquainted with? when to another audience he recommends it, that they should “search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal “life,” does he not in so many words represent

them as being already convinced of the doctrine of eternal life? and as by the scriptures here mentioned we are undoubtedly to understand the writings of Moses and the prophets, so I think it must be sufficiently evident, that in these writings that doctrine is no where spoken of as a peculiaritie of the mosaic or jewish institution, but as the common sentiment of nature. when his disciple St. Peter, in the name of the rest of the apostles as well as in his own behalf and on occasion of the question he had put to them, "will ye also go away?" answers; "Lord, to whom should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?" does not his language necessarily implie the sentiment itself of a future state as already familiar and intimate to his mind, for the happiness of which he considers the instructions and doctrine of our Savior as in the best manner adapted to prepare them? if, when the apostles, after his ascension speak of Judas as being "gone to his own place," we are to understand the expression, as I suppose it to be generally interpreted, as refering to the portion assigned him in the future world, nothing can be more evident than that the sentiment is introduced not as a newly published doctrine, but as a commonly received and well known idea. . when St. Paul thus addresses himself to the Jews of Antioch; "it was necessarie that the word of God should first be spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you and judge yourselves unworthie of
" everlasting

“ everlasting life, lo, we turn to the gentiles ;” and when, concerning these gentiles we are told, that upon it’s being accordingly preached to them, “ they glorified the word of the Lord, and that “ as many of them as were ordained,” or as the original word may properly denote and was undoubtedly here intended to mean, disposed, “ to “ eternal life, believed ;” what can be plainer, than that the doctrine of eternal life is not here spoken of as being a principle before unknown either to jew or gentile ? particularly as to this last expression applied, as we see, to the gentiles, how can we otherwise understand it than as refering to some happie influence, which the expectation and belief of a future state had previously had upon their minds, and in consequence of which they were “ disposed” upon the present occasion to hearken to the doctrine of the gospel so richly impregnated with this idea, and in it’s great and ultimate aim intended to corroborate and enforce it, and to inculcate upon mankind the necessarie meetness and preparation for it ? accordingly it is the same great and inspired apostle, who in his epistle to the Romans so expressly asserts the knowlege and expectation of a future state to have been generally prevalent throughout the heathen world. “ who, “ knowing,” he says, “ the judgment of God, “ that they, who commit such things are worthie “ of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them, that do them.” where by “ the “ judgment

“ judgment of God” we are undoubtedly to understand the retributions of a future world ; and by “ death,” not the mere dissolution itself of the animal frame, but the formidable and tremendous consequences of it to the impenitent and ungodlie. for in itself alone it is the common fate of all. whereas the apostle is evidently here speaking of something connected with it, that was peculiar to those, who “ committed such things,” and it is in the same epistle too, that we have occurring that so animated description of this “ expectation,” as having been that of the whole world itself from it’s earliest age down to the very period, in which the gospel was first published to mankind. “ for “ the earnest *expectation* of the creature, or creation, that is, the rational creation of mankind, “ *waiteth* for the manifestation of the sons of “ God,” for the glories, the bright, conspicuous honors, that are in that character to be conferred upon them. “ for the creature,” the race of mankind, “ was made subject to vanitie,” the comparative vanities of this life, “ not willingly,” not without some generous aspirations after a state more elevated and sublime, “ but by reason of “ him, who has subjected the same in hope,” in conformitie to that divine constitution of things, which has for the present appointed us to this inferior one, *in hope* however of that more glorious and sublime, and even as a gracious discipline in order to the more perfect enjoyment of it ; “ be-
“ cause

“ cause the creature itself also,” not any separate or peculiarly privileged bodie of mankind only, but the intire human race “ shall be delivered from “ the bondage of corruption,” from all the vanities and imperfections of the present state, in which alas, temptation and vice have so much power towards enthralling and captivating the mind, “ into “ the glorious libertie of the children of God.” “ for we know, that the whole creation,” and not merely the christian bodie, “ groaneth,” the very same word, which in the immediately following verse, as well as in the 2 Corinth. v. 2, and 4. he makes use of, by which to expresse the ardent desires in reference to this future state, entertained by himself and other christian converts, “ groaneth, “ and travaileth in pain together until now.” when in that immediately following verse he speaks of christians as having the “ first fruits of the “ spirit,” he refers undoubtedly to the resurrection of our Lord making so eminent a part of the evidences in favor of a future state that are peculiar to the gospel here styled the spirit, and being at once so signal a specimen, pledge and proof of it. it is the same kind of language with that he uses in the above-mentioned fifth chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, and where too he is so expressly distinguishing between the natural evidences of a future state and those which arise from the special and miraculous attestations of christianitie; “ now he that has wrought us to the self-
“ same

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“ same thing is God ;” it is no other than the sovereign, eternal Deitie himself, who in the very frame and constitution of our natures has inspired this glorious hope. it follows, “ who *also*,” in farther evidence and declaration of it, “ has given “ us the earnest of the spirit.” we find it to be accordingly by the author of the epistle to the hebrews expressly spoken of as founded upon *two* immutable things, namely, the “ promise” and “ the oath” of God. by the former of which we are undoubtedly to understand the natural indications and evidences exhibiting in their united view. so truly promising an aspect in favor of it. and by the latter, an oath being a more especial and extraordinary method of asseveration amongst mankind, is very aptly denoted the miraculous dispensation of the gospel. upon these principles it is, that St. Peter with the greatest accuracie of sentiment speaks of our being “ begoten *again* unto “ this lively hope” in consequence of our christian belief. and even that very passage itself, which may seem so strongly to militate against what we have been insisting upon, is in fact confirmatorie of it. that I mean, in which “ life and immortalitie” are said to be “ brought to light by the gospel ;” the original word here rendered “ brought to light” properly signifying to *enlighten* or to *illustrate*. it is the same with that, which occurs, John i. 9. “ that was the true light, which lighteth” or enlighteneth everie man, “ that cometh into the “ world.”

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“ world.” now to illustrate or enlighten a sentiment or principle is not first to discover but only to corroborate and enforce it.

And with the highest reason indeed it is, that the sacred writings suppose the doctrine of a future state to have been thus previously discovered. even independently of all considerations derived from the nature and qualitie, the excellencie and perfection of our mental powers, the idea in general of the soul itself as a principle distinct from matter and as a substance wholly spiritual, this single idea, I say, carries us at least thus far in the argument, and surely it is no inconsiderable step to take in it, that the decease or dissolution of the one can by no means or in the least degree implie the extinction of the other or the loss of any of it's peculiar powers. when we are told of any one, that he has unhappily lost his hearing, we by no means think of infering from hence, that he must needs too have lost his sight. and why, because these are senses in themselves totally independent of one another, though connected in the same organised system of matter. in like manner the human soul and bodie being of a nature and substance wholly different from each other, notwithstanding the temporarie union established between them, there cannot be the least pretence or color of reason for supposing, that the destruction of the bodily form and cessation of the merely animal life should at all affect the vitalitie or being of the soul. and that

there is indeed such a distinction seems to me to be as much the matter of immediate consciousness and perception, as that between the now mentioned corporeal senses. upon the footing therefore of this single argument alone the continuities of our spiritual being, notwithstanding the dissolution of the body, is the only sentiment upon this head, that we can naturally embrace, or upon the just principles of philosophical reasoning adhere to, unless haply there should be any thing in the peculiar powers and properties belonging to this spiritual substance separately and in themselves considered to indicate any such approaching termination of them. but here every thing aloud proclaims the contrarie. supposing only in general the existence of an intelligent and graciously designing mind, from whom we ourselves and all other beings around us have derived that being, and whatever it is that constitutes their peculiar natures, how shall we better judge concerning the final destination of this or that in particular, the place or situation in nature assigned to it, than by the consideration of its peculiar powers fitting it more directly for this or that? we see in the peculiar make and structure of the feathered tribe the nicest correspondence to that airy region in which they roam: in the scaly class the like peculiar form adapted to the element assigned them. and thus too the terrestrial animal we find with never-failing exactness and proportion to be possessed of appetites and powers accommodated to that

that particular scene of animal being, in which he takes his range. nor is it only in this general correspondence, that the wise and provident hand of nature is so easily, but yet never without the highest occasion given for our admiration, to be discerned. the same beautiful ordonance and adjustment is apparent in the still more appropriate departments of these respective elements. “the Leviathan,” as the psalmist observes, “is made to play in the sea,” and not in the scantie river or small-dimensioned pool. the lion and the tiger have the desert and the forest for their appointed habitation. and in any less extended scope how insignificant and useless would have been their peculiar strength and fierceness, or magnitude of form? and can we imagin, that there should not be at least an equal order and proportion apparent in the mental scene? and yet in man how difficult to be discerned, should we once suppose the whole extent and compass of his being to be confined to this world alone? his faculties are by much too big, too vast, the affections and desires inseparable from his frame by far too elevated and enlarged, to meet with their full and adequate gratification in the present scene. to know, to contemplate, to adore, to love, to resemble and to exult in the approving smile of his maker, these are the high prerogatives of his frame, these the sovereign and most exalted honors of his being. in comparison of which, or the happiness resulting from them, how mean, how

despicable the delights, which mere sensitive or animal nature can afford him ! and yet in the present state how many his avocations from the exercise and cultivation of these superior powers ; the powers themselves however remaining in their fullest strength and vigor ; nay, though ever so assiduously cultivated, only becoming by that very means so much the more enlarged and capacious still ? the bodily senses and appetites perform their several offices to the full in the present life. they soon attain to their utmost possible perfection, and then gradually and sensibly decay. all which amounts to the most evident proof in nature, that they were designed only for the uses of the present state. but the direct contrarie of all this is true with respect to the mental powers and affections. the more they are exercised and by how much the longer cultivated and employed, so much the more do they expand themselves, and with a proportionably greater vigor and alertness pursue their several objects and delights. and the highest improvements, that we can now make in knowlege, virtue and devotion, serve only to convince us, that there is something yet beyond, not only infinitely desirable, but in the progressive culture and exercise of the same faculties actually to be attained. to imagin therefore, that man with all this provision for a future state about him, this native tendencie towards it, these eager desires after it, this deeply feelled and ever growing capacitie for it,

these

these happie prelibations of it, should after all be not designed for such a state, would be in effect the same absurditie as to imagin, that the tree was intended by nature to blossom only, but not to bear fruit, the bird designed only for the nest, or the unborn child to perish in the womb. thus apparently and conspicuously, thus powerfully, uniformly, and by the conspiring tendencie of everie facultie, of everie affection belonging to our natures, have we been formed to the hope of immortalitie. and there is, I think, a prodigious cogencie and force in the observation made by Athenagoras in his treatise de Mortuorum Resurrectione, §. 13, p. 189, that, as the objects, which the human mind is naturally fited to contemplate are eternal, namely the perfections of the sovereign being, we may justly conclude the mind itself to be made for the eternal contemplation of them. accordingly he insists upon it, that the grand and primarie topic of argument in proof of a future state is the nature, faculties and constitution of the human mind, considered in connexion with the originally benevolent purpose and designation of it's creator. his own treatise refered to is evidently founded upon this principle. and he is, in short, almost angry with those, of whom he says there were many, and I am apt to think there are some such reasoners now, who made the condemnation of the wicked to be the sole argument for a future state; which he says is only the third reason for it, observing

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observing too, that upon this principle infants and good men would be excluded from it. Vid. Athenag. ibid. §. 12. p. 185, 6.

But how prodigiously will the force and conviction of our present reasoning still be heightened by a more distinct recollection of the character and perfections of that divine being, who has thus "wrought us to it." thus formed and fabricated by the powers of our mental frame for immortal aims, it is not from any inferior, promethean hand that we have derived these high prerogatives of being, but from that of the sovereign and eternal deitie himself, to whom not only do we ascribe in general the character of benevolence and good-will, but concerning whom we have everie reason, that surrounding nature, philosophic wisdom, serious reflexion or well-applied experience can suggest, for believing, that he is exuberantly and immensely good. and of such a being and in a case like this can we suppose him to be the inspirer of abortive hopes? in the order of his sovereign and universal providence, how often may we have seen this or the other occurence bearing for a while but a comfortless and gloomie aspect, yet appearing in the end to be productive of some highly welcome and satisfying good? and in this there is nothing but what is exactly corresponding to the idea of his infinite benevolence considered in conjunction with the scantiness and imperfection of our views. but that the fair and lovely aspects of nature, her promising

ming countenance, her animating look, should terminate at length, or as we may rather say, terminate so very soon, in the total loss and absolute deprivation of the good she thus forebodes, upon what principles shall we reconcile this to a character of sovereign and boundless love? surely that gracious being, who thus brings good out of evil, will scarcely withhold from us that very good, the hope of which he has himself inspired. or shall we be content to say, that such a hope might be necessary as a moral instrument in the hand of providence for maintaining the regularitie and good order of societie in the present state, and that this may be abundantly sufficient to account for it's having been so deeply rooted in our natures, without supposing the actual accomplishment of it to have been ever intended? but must it not be altogether as easie to omnipotence to gratifie this hope in bestowing the expected good, as at first to inspire it for these temporarie uses alone? must it not be altogether as easie to the sovereign creator to continue our being into some future scene, as it was at first to give it? is there any power in nature, supposing this to be his intention, that can in opposition to it "stay his hand, or say unto him, "what doest thou?" is it not a hope, the gratification of which, far unlike in this respect to those we sometimes entertain in reference to the objects of this earthly scene, in which to be indulged would be our miserie; is it not, I say, an hope, the gratification

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gratification of which will be in the highest degree
 futable and felicitating to our natures? and these
 principles admitted, how shall we be able to ac-
 count for the non-accomplishment of it, notwith-
 standing these present uses to be served by the hope
 itself; without directly abridging and contracting
 our ideas of the divine benignitie and love; nay
 without supposing the supreme deitie himself by
 the peremptorie interposition, as it were, of his
 own will to restrain and limit the exertions of it?
 and shall we ever assume that as a measure or prin-
 ciple in the conduct of divine providence, the rea-
 son of which is only to be derived from a defect of
 goodness? or what should we think of any earthly
 parent seeing it necessarie to encorage the obedi-
 ence of his child by the promise of some future
 good, and being able with infinite ease to effectuate
 that promise, should nevertheless decline it; and
 this notwithstanding the happiest influence arising
 from such a promise in the case supposed upon the
 ingenuous and filial temper? shall we then heighten
 the absurditie yet farther by imputing such an im-
 perfection of moral character to the father of the
 universe, which we can scarcely imagin to be possi-
 ble in that of the earthly parent? but after all it
 by no means appears to be a justly concluded prin-
 ciple, that there should be any such absolute neces-
 sitie for the expectation and hope of a future life,
 in order to the well-being of societie in the present
 state. it's vast utilitie, it's high, unspeakable, infi-
 nite

nite moment even with respect to the present comfort and joy of individuals, as well as in its influence upon public order and social manners, ought with the warmest sentiments of gratitude and praise to that sovereign deitie, who has "wrought" it in us, to be acknowledged. yet had no such future state of being been indeed the allotted portion of mankind, the immediate satisfactions of virtue and the horrors of a guiltie mind might have been rendered so much the more intense, and the natural consequences of virtue and vice in the present life have been so much the more deeply and sensibly impressed upon the human apprehension, as very effectually to answer the ends of a moral discipline extending only in its ultimate and highest views to so short a period of being. supposing however such a future state to be in the infinite goodness of the sovereign mind ordained for man, it is natural to imagin, that the hope of it should be interwoven into the present system of things in order to heighten the felicities of our being here, and to animate the progress of that virtue by which alone we can be qualified for the glories of this higher scene.

Upon such previous reflexions I have dwelled the longer, as unhappily it has come to be with numbers a principle, nay to be considered almost as a dutie, to depretiate these natural arguments in favor of a future state, and as far as it is in their power to annihilate them, intending the greater

honor to christianitie by establiſhing this grand, fundamental article upon it's ſingle evidence alone. but ſurely by how much the more intereſting a doctrine we eſteem it, ſo much the leſs willing ſhould we be, on this very account, to reſt the intire proof of it upon any excluſive mode of reaſoning, or manner of reveling it. with pleaſure, methinks, both in our own behalf, and for the ſake of human nature in general, ſhould we be hearken- ing to everie voice, that did but ſo much as whiſper a ſentiment like this. but if nature has in fact, not with an indiſtinct, a feeble or a dubious voice, but articulately, clearly, loudly proclaimed. the truth, what can I call it, but treacherie to ourſelves, treacherie to mankind, treacherie in religion's ſacred, all-important cauſe, to be not only turning a deaf ear to it ourſelves, but even at pains to ſtifle and ſuppreſs the ſound of a voice ſo welcome, that neither may others any longer hear it! the honor of religion in general as a ſovereignly efficacious means of human virtue and human happineſs will ſurely be beſt conſulted by having all it's principles eſta- bliſhed upon the largeſt bottom. and can we rea- ſonably, naturally or conſiſtently ſacrifice this in honor of any particular inſtitution intended to en- force it? or how indeed, I would rather aſk, can it be to the honor of christianitie, how contribute to it's greater utilitie, how increaſe the comforts ariſing from it, to be thus induſtriouſly employed in extinguishing all other lights, by which it's own
moſt

most interesting and important principles might be more firmly evinced. will they become less important on account of the higher degree of evidence attending them? can the hope of a future life be less welcome, less joyous to the heart of man for his having accumulated proof in favor of it? will that, which christianitie affords, be at all the more credible or satisfactorie for standing alone; or the force of it's own peculiar testimonie in any degree abated by being considered in conjunction with other evidences appearing in confirmation of it? but, though this doctrine of a future state cannot justly be looked upon as being peculiar to christianitie, though we cannot be said to have derived our knowlege of it originally from the gospel, yet does it contain so many glorious peculiarities in illustration of it, that it is indeed with the utmost propriety spoken of by St. Peter in the passage we have cited, as having "begotten us *again* unto this lively hope." these we will now procede to consider, both for the comfort and satisfaction of our own minds, and in honor of that religion which we profess. for of such infinite moment and importance is this doctrine of a future state, both to ourselves and to the rest of mankind, for whose happiness hereafter, as well as in the present life, we are bound to be most affectionately concerned, that nothing, one would imagin, could make christianitie more welcome to us, than the consideration, that by it's peculiar

principles and authoritie it has in so direct and admirable a manner inculcated, illustrated and enforced a hope so “animating;” a hope, that carries in it the full accomplishment of all our most eager expectations, of all our most intense and ardent wishes. nor can any thing be more highly honorable to christianitie itself, than so gloriously to have enlightened, as we shall find in fact it has, a doctrine thus essentially, thus infinitely important to man, which it could not originally revele. in the prosecution of this design we shall be under the necessity of recurring to some topics of argument, that have been already insisted upon in treating upon the several subjects, with which they were more immediately connected. but the collecting together into one united and summarie view the various illustrations and enforcements, which this great doctrine has received from christianitie, and in which consists so much of it’s excellencie and usefulness, is a matter of too much moment to be upon any such consideration neglected. and this the rather, as such a review itself, independently of this particular intention to be answered by it, may not be without it’s use. these peculiarities then of the gospel we will go on to point out under the two following heads. the evidence of a future state of rewards and punishments; and the nature, on the one hand, of that happiness, which will constitute these rewards, and on the other, of those torments, in which these future punishments will

will consist. in relation to the first of these particulars, or the evidences of a future state of rewards and punishments, what there is peculiar to the gospel is derived partly from the external evidence of christianitie itself, and partly from it's internal structure, or those principles and doctrines, which these evidences were intended to establish. under each of these particulars several topics have been already insisted upon relative to the present argument. and they are for the main as follows. in the first place, the general evidence in favor of christianitie is so great as to be abundantly sufficient for satisfying our minds as to the truth of those doctrines, that are in everie respect peculiar to it, and rest for the proof of them upon that evidence alone. from hence it must necessarily follow, that it can be no small degree of confirmation, that is given by these evidences, to any doctrine promulgated by it, that had been previously made known to mankind by the light of nature, and consequently to that of a future state of rewards and punishments in particular. again, some of the most considerable of those miracles, in which the external evidence of christianitie consists, are in a peculiar manner and by their distinct and special nature adapted to enforce this doctrine. there is no doubt to be made, but that the external attestations of the gospel might have been so contrived as to be everie way sufficient for the confirmation of it's truth, even though the "author" of it had

had never risen from the dead, or by his power renewed the life of any others. miracles of another kind might have been wrought in such numbers, in such varietie, and with such circumstances of credibilitie, as fully to have answered that end, even though not accompanied with any of this particular kind or species, as is evident from the instance of Moses, who never raised any from the dead. nevertheless in such miracles as these attending the publication of the gospel the advantage is apparent. at the same time, that they answer the general purpose of a divine testimonie to the truth of christianitie, they are likewise a proof in kind of that particular doctrine of a future state contained in it; so many specimens as it were of it's realitie. in the persons restored to life, and by their actions and conversation manifesting themselves to be the very same, who once animated the bodies now again quickened by the reviving power of the redeemer, providence, as we observed when discoursing more directly upon the subject, has supplied us with a kind of demonstration, addressed to the senses and made familiar to the mind, of the possibilitie of continuing in some other state the same conscious individual beings we are in this. and then, secondly, in the internal structure of the gospel, or the principles, which it's miraculous evidences were intended to inculcate, there has been a very striking attestation given to the truth of this doctrine, additional to those direct and positive declarations,

clarations, which it contains, in relation to it. so many of it's capital and leading discoveries do we find enforcing upon us this belief, and in a manner so convincing, that we cannot but suppose it to have been the exprefs intention of heaven, among other important ends to be answered by them, that they should do so. thus, for example, the realitie of another state is, as we have seen, taught us in the gospel, by one, who has actually been an inhabitant of it, who most solemnly declares, that he has himself for a long time resided in it, and to the credibilitie of whose testimonie, were we to consider it as merely human, no exception lies. is not this a circumstance even upon the footing of natural evidence alone strongly inviting our assent? the supreme being, had he seen fit, could easily have empowered a mere man like ourselves to have wrought the very same miracles, that were performed by our blessed Savior, and to have taught under the sanction of these miracles the very same doctrines, that were by him published to mankind. what then can we more naturally suppose, than that in appointing one of the original inhabitants of the world of spirits to be his messenger to our race it was the gracious design of the sovereign Deitie, that the assurances he should give us in relation to such a world might be attended with everie possible motive of conviction? in short our blessed Savior, as we have already endeavored more largely to shew, has taught the doctrine of a future state with
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all the same advantages for gaining our assent, as naturally attend the report of any credible person informing us of some particular spot or territory in this world of ours, which he himself had actually visited, though we perhaps had never so much as heard of it before. but as one plain and convincing argument in proof of a future state is to be thus evidently deduced from the præ-existence of Christ, so likewise is this doctrine in the strongest manner illustrated by the original dignitie of his person. he appeared upon earth on purpose to promote the highest interests of mankind, to recover a degenerate world to sentiments of religion and the love of virtue. but would a being thus eminent and illustrious in his nature, would the only-begotten of the father, would that very being, who throughout the whole rational and moral universe was of all others the brightest and most resplendent image of his sovereign glories; would this very being, I say, have been sent into the world even to advance such an interest as this, if after all, the glorious effects of his mission must have terminated within the short period of human life on earth? had such been the necessarie limitation even of the highest human happiness, would it not have been far more congruous to the nature of the mission and to the wisdom of the sovereign mind, to have employed some vastly inferior being? and when in the system itself of gospel-doctrine we find such a particular stress laid upon this amazing
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and incomprehensible dignitie of it's author in his personal rank and character, what can we so justly presume to have been the design of this, as that of inculcating upon us the belief, that the souls, which a being of so sublime and elevated a nature came to redeem, must needs be immortal? and this is an argument prodigiously heightened by considering, that for their redemption he not only became incarnate and a sojourner here on earth, which in itself alone would have been an abasement beyond expression great and condescending, but likewise, while dwelling among us submitted to the very lowest condition of outward life, to the greatest varietie of sufferings and sorrows, and to all the indignities, that the most inveterate malice could invent, expiring at length in consequence of it between two malefactors on the cross. is it any way credible, that such a stupendous act of condescension as this should have taken place according to the plan and measures of divine providence itself in order to save the creature of a day, to rescue, even though it were from sin, a being, who was so soon to sink into nothing, or to impress upon the heart of man that divine image, which after a few moments more elapsed on earth was to be effaced for ever? the same general conclusions apparently follow from the personal dignitie of that holy spirit, who bore so signal a part in the original establishment of the gospel, and who is still, as the minister of God's spiritual kingdom

kingdom on earth employed in promoting among mankind the great and ultimate design of it. we have likewise seen it to be the office of an innumerable company of those exalted spirits, the angels of heaven to "minister to the heirs of salvation" in promoting that virtue, which according to the gracious stipulations of the gospel intitles to it. and is not this likewise a grand, illustrious ministration strongly intimating to our coolest judgment and at the same time urging the sentiment on our warmest passions, the dignitie of human nature, the importance of human virtue here on earth, and consequently our connexion with some succeeding state of existence, in which this our native dignitie is to appear in all it's lustre, and our virtue be made complete? thus from every one of these topics separately considered, there arises a plain and obvious, a natural and convincing argument, an argument supported by all the peculiar authoritie of that christian religion, from whence we have derived them, in proof of a future state. how great then must be their force, when viewed in their united strength, and when we seriously ask ourselves, whether it be likely, whether it be possible, that all heaven should be thus employed in behalf of man, and yet man after all have a being so short and transient, as after a few days of comparative vanitie passed, to exist no more for ever? such then are the peculiar and highly eminent advantages of the gospel with respect to the evidences

dences of a future state of punishments and re-
wards. CHAP. III.

Let us procede to inquire, in the second place, what peculiar discoveries it has made to us in relation to the nature of that happiness and miserie, in which these rewards and punishments consist, and what are the advantages we derive from it in reference to these particulars. and here it must be extremely obvious, in the first place, to those, who are in any measure conversant with the sacred writings of the new testament, that the peculiar discoveries they contain in relation to the happiness of a future world, principally consist in the information they have given us concerning the connexions, which we are there to have with those very beings, those exalted beings we have been speaking of under the preceding topic. “we are come,” says the author of the epistle to the hebrews, in pleasing hope, in firm perswasion, in full assurance, “we are” already “come,” not only “to God, the “judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made “perfect,” but as a christian writer he was enabled to add, “and to Jesus, the mediator of the better “covenant, and to an innumerable companie of “angels.” with these glorious beings are we to be associated in the heavenly world to all eternitie. and with respect to the “angels” in particular, it is in these sacred scriptures declared, that we are hereafter to be “like” them. a declaration, that cannot but give us very great ideas of the subli-

mitie of the heavenly happiness, at the same time, that it informs us, from whence principally it will arise; namely, from the exaltation, exercise and perfection of our moral powers. for they are "holie angels." and this is their highest honor. the most honorable likeness therefore, that we can bear to them, and which we may so naturally presume to have been chiefly intended by our blessed Savior in such a declaration, must necessarily consist in resembling their heavenly virtues. but what the scriptures primarily and for the most part insist upon in reference to this particular, is our being hereafter united in societie with the Lord Jesus Christ himself. thus our Savior in his last affectionate solemn prayer for his disciples, makes it the matter of his request in behalf of *all* his followers, and not of these disciples only, that they may "be with him, where he is, to behold his glorie." the same apprehensions concerning the heavenly happiness we are taught by St. Paul to entertain in that ardent, but yet, as appears, submissive wish; "for I desire to depart, and to be *with* Christ, "which is far better." and he elsewhere assures us, that "if we suffer with Christ, we shall also "reign *with* him." once more, in the book of revelation our blessed Savior is represented as solemnly declaring, that "to him, who overcometh, "will he grant to sit in his throne," or as the passage ought by all means to have been rendered according to the same use of the original word at

other times occurring, “*at his throne,*” that is, near it, even as “*he himself also overcame and is set in or at his father’s throne ;*” and that “*they who are worthie shall walk with him in white,*” clothed with the most resplendent glories. what could have given us either a more exalted or a more amiable idea of the happiness of a future world ? our blessed Savior is there eminently and richly “*crowned with glorie and honor.*” among all the heavenly inhabitants he is distinguished as enjoying in the very highest degree the divine complacencie and love. and yet is the future state allotted for the good and virtuous of our world constantly represented in the scriptures, nay a particular emphasis seems to be laid upon it, not only as a state of union and societie with him, but even of nearness to him. it must therefore be a state, in which we ourselves shall be sharing in this divine complacencie after a manner at present incomprehensible, but, as we may well believe, in such a manner and to such a degree likewise, as will advance both the dignitie and felicitie of our natures to a consummately glorious and most exalted height. and what extatic rapturous entertainment must it needs afford us, invigorated and enlarged as then will be our minds in the sentiments of devotion, to be associated with this glorious, this inconceivably great and illustrious being in celebrating the praises of “*his father and our father, his God and our God ?*” and what a peculiarly exquisite satisfaction

tion must it be to our ingenuous and grateful affections then to behold the glories of that merciful, condescending Savior, who, whilst here on earth, endured such a varietie of sorrows for our sakes! to see that compassionate Jesus adored by the highest angels of heaven, who, whilst here below, was reviled and insulted by the lowest and by the worst of men! and, though there is not, that I know of, any distinct mention made in the scriptures of the holie spirit in this particular view, as one of those exalted, heavenly beings, with whom the good and virtuous are in a future state to be socially united, yet from the general analogie of the sacred writings we may safely conclude, that this will be a yet farther particular contributing to the perfection of their blifs. but besides this so pleasing and delightful idea of the heavenly happiness, which arises from that connexion with all these refined and elevated spirits, of which the gospel has informed us, there is another most important end, which the revelation of it was undoubtedly intended to answer, and to which everie one for himself ought with the utmost sollicitude and earnestness of soul to be applying it. it is a connexion directly and most admirably fitted to convince us of the absolute necessitie of our own personal virtue and holiness, in order to our participation in the joys of immortalitie, and to enforce that grand maxim of christianitie and of all true religion, that “without it no man shall ever see
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“ the Lord.” for what happiness can it be to us to be joined in society with these venerable, exalted beings, if we are not in the taste and inclination of our own minds formed to their heavenly relish and god-like disposition? or how can it be consistent with their perfect and undisturbed felicity, that without this similar love of virtue we should be admitted into communion with them? or rather indeed how is it possible, that any such communion should subsist? “ can two walk together unless they be agreed?” “ can righteousness have fellowship with unrighteousness, Christ with Belial, light with darkness?”

With respect likewise to the punishments of a future world, the gospel not only informs us of the existence of those infernal spirits, the devil and his angels, whose original apostasy and present situation we treated of in the preceding chapter, but has also, as we then more particularly observed, greatly heightened our idea of these punishments by assuring us, that it is in the company of these forlorn and wretched spirits that the obstinately wicked and impenitent are to have their portion assigned them. of the day of judgment likewise, the solemn, public day of judgment and the many great and singular advantages, which arise from the appointment of it, we have treated at large, and shall therefore now only suggest this single sentiment by way of recollection in relation to it, and in order to render the argument of this chapter

chapter complete, that for the knowlege we have of such a day, and for all the advantages attending the expectation of it we are intirely indebted to the gospel. it is at this grand solemnitie, that the resurrection, or restoration to an embodied state, is to commence. then it is, that they “ who are
 “ in their graves, shall hear the voice of the son
 “ of man, and come forth ; they that have done
 “ good to the resurrection of life, and they that
 “ have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.” with respect to which it is to be observed, that our best and purest, our most satisfying and elevated pleasures do not even in the present life arise from the bodie. it would therefore be extremely unnatural to imagin, that this should be the case in the next. and we may be very sufficiently happie hereafter, if being like the angels of God can make us so, without having any bodies at all. “ the soul,” says Tertullian, “ will know well
 “ enough how to have it’s griefs and it’s joys in
 “ another world, even though separated from the
 “ flesh ; since, even whilst in the flesh, it can
 “ grieve, when it has a mind, though that be un-
 “ hurt ; and can, if so disposed, rejoice, though
 “ that be injured or in pain. and if it can do
 “ this at it’s own pleasure here, how much more
 “ according to the judiciary appointment of God
 “ after death ? nor are all it’s operations, in the
 “ moral estimation of them, even now performed
 “ with the instrumentalitie of the flesh ; the di-
 “ vine

“vine censure extending even to it’s simple cogi-
“tations and mere naked volitions. he that look-
“eth, so as to lust, has already committed adulterie
“in his heart. and what more congruous, than
“that for a crime committed without the concur-
“rence of the flesh, the soul should be punished,
“even though it were in no expectation of being
“ever again united to the flesh. in like manner
“for those pious sentiments and affections, in
“which it made no use of the flesh, it shall in re-
“compence be comforted without the flesh.”
adeo novit, for so runs the original passage refered
to, apud inferos anima & dolere & gaudere sine
carne; quia & in carne illæsa, si velit, dolet, &
læsa, si velit, gaudet. hoc, si ex arbitrio suo in
vita, quanto magis ex judicio Dei post mortem?
sed nec omnia opera cum carnis ministerio anima
partitur; nam & solos cogitatus & nudas voluntates
censura divina persequitur. qui viderit ad concu-
piscendum, jam adulteravit in corde. ergo propter
hoc congruentissimum est animam, licet non expec-
tata carne, puniri, quod non sociata carne com-
misit. sic & ob cogitatus pios & benevolos, in qui-
bus carne non eguit, sine carne recreabitur. of
this independence of the soul upon the bodie, as
appearing in the state of sleep, he has in another
passage of this treatise given us so lively a repre-
sentation, that I cannot but here subjoin it in far-
ther illustration of the present topic. “when we
“are asleep,” says he, “the soul itself pretends

“ to be gone about it’s business, and by thus dis-
 “ sembling it’s presence gives us a very useful hint
 “ as to the approaching time, when it must be
 “ gone indeed. yet all the while it has it’s dreams.
 “ nor is it ever idle or at rest, scorning to submit
 “ it’s native immortalitie to the stupifying, lethar-
 “ gic power. and very sufficient evidence is it
 “ indeed, that upon such occasions it gives us of a
 “ perpetually moving and active principle, that be-
 “ longs to it. it travels over sea and land, trans-
 “ acts a multitude of affairs and is oft in a mightie
 “ bustle. it is sometimes hard at work, and at
 “ another time diverts itself; sometimes it is in
 “ grief, and sometimes in joy; things lawful and
 “ unlawful are the object of it’s pursuits; upon
 “ the whole making us thoroughly sensible, that
 “ it can acquit itself very ably without the body,
 “ and is well furnished with limbs and members
 “ of it’s own.” ---sic patitur, ut alibi agere videat-
 tur, dissimulatione presentiae futuram absentiam
 ediscens; & tamen interim somniat, nec quiescit
 nec ignavesceat omnino, nec naturam immortalitatis
 fervam sopori addicit. probat se mobilem semper.
 terra, mari peregrinatur, negotiatur, agitur, la-
 borat, ludit, dolet, gaudet, licita atque inlicita
 persequitur. ostendit, quod sine corpore *etiam*
plurimum possit, quod & suis instructa sit membris.
 Tertull. de anima sub. fine & c. xliii. neverthe-
 less, as the scriptures have assured us, that at the
 grand period of public and universal judgment the
 righteous

righteous shall be invested with a bodie so far refined beyond any ideas, that we can now form of a corporeal substance, as that in the judgment of St. Paul it may be most aptly denoted by calling it a spiritual one, we may certainly conclude, that from it will arise some accession to our heavenly happiness, though it cannot in the nature of things be the principal source of it. how far this sentiment is consistent with the stress, that is apparently laid in the new testament upon the resurrection of the bodie, has been already considered. See Book II. c. viii. p. 314---16. and that in the case of those, who shall “come forth to the resurrection of damnation,” the bodies, which shall then be given them, may become the instruments of their dreadful torment, will in the general be without any difficultie imagined. this then is a brief and summarie view of the severall distinct, peculiar advantages, with which the doctrine of a future state is inculcated by the gospel. and upon a survey of them we cannot surely but with the devouteſt ardor be adopting the apostles ascription of praise, in another view already referred to; “blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again unto” this “lively hope”---“to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away;” “an inheritance incorruptible,” not to be torn from us by violence, of which we cannot be deprived by any fraud or cunning, in our title to which no flaw can be

found, but, which is inviolably secured to us by the promises “ of that God, who cannot lie :” “ an inheritance undefiled,” not obtained by those unrighteous and dishonorable measures, which are so often made use of in the pursuit of a worldly inheritance, and on account of which they so often prove a torment to the possessors of them ; an inheritance “ undefiled” likewise, as being intirely free from those vexatious cares and perplexities, with which our earthly inheritances however honorably acquired or enjoyed are so often intermingled, and by which the satisfactions arising from them are so much corrupted and debased : an inheritance, “ that fadeth not away,” that cannot be dissipated by any external accident, which no length of duration can in the least impair, but, which will continue in all it’s richness, plenitude and perfection, throughout the endless ages of eternitie.

C H A P. IV.

On baptism.

IT may naturally be expected from those who ^{CHAP. IV.} profess themselves to be the disciples of Jesus Christ, that they endeavor to exhibit not only the doctrines of his religion, but it's external institutions likewise in such a light, as that they may appear rational, worthie of God, and well-adapted to promote virtue and the highest good of man. and in order to this little more is necessarie than the representing them in that plain and simple view, that has been given of these institutions in the revelation itself. this being once done, it will not require any peculiar degrees of penetration or any nice and labored deductions of argument to discern their usefulness and excellencie. this general observation with respect to the external solemnities of our religion, may, I apprehend, with the strictest propriety be applied to that of baptism in particular. according to the plain and most obvious account, that is given of it in the scriptures, it is directly calculated for promoting that holiness of heart and life, which is the foundation of all solid and substantial

stantial happiness, which must be the end of all true religion, and which is the express and avowed design of the gospel. there is indeed one sentiment, that has been advanced upon the subject of baptism, which if admitted, would make an inquiry into it's original nature and primitive uses to be a matter of comparatively little importance. be the result of such an inquiry as it may, it is alleged however, "that the ordinance itself was only temporarie, appointed indeed by the author of our holie religion for the observance of the first profelytes to christianitie, whether in a nation or in a familie, but with no intention of it's being administered to any of their descendants." were this truly the case, the inquiry we have mentioned, and which we propose in this chapter to pursue, would be rather a point of critical curiositie, than of practical importance; for which reason I should have chosen to decline it. but if we, the posteritie of christian parents, are by virtue of our own personal obligations altogether as much interested in the institution of baptism, as were any of those to whom the gospel was originally preached, then amidst the several opinions into which the christian world has been divided upon this head, it cannot but be thought by everie one who is justly concerned, either for the simplicitie of the christian religion, or for promoting among those, who profess it, the proper efficacie of it's ordinances, to be highly expedient, that we should

should with the greatest diligence and impartialitie inquire, what are the ends, which this particular solemnitie was originally intended to answer, and what the advantages designed to accrue from it in the case of the primitive believers. for these, whatever they were, must needs be our own directorie and guide in relation to the judgment we are to form concerning it, the benefits we are to look for from our compliance with it, and the improvement to be made of it in the regulation and conduct of our lives. upon a united view of these several considerations I apprehend that the most useful method of treating this subject will be as follows.

First, to state in general the nature and design of christian baptism according to the account or idea given of it in the sacred scriptures of the new testament.

Secondly, to shew that it was an institution not of a temporarie nature, but intended by the great christian legislator himself, who appointed it, for the perpetual use and benefit of all, who should profess themselves his disciples. and then to subjoin a reflexion or two as to the use or application to be made of the preceding particulars.

In the first place, we are to state the nature and design of christian baptism, according to the account or idea given of it in the sacred writings of the new testament. as to the formal and exact nature of the action or outward solemnity itself, it plainly appears to consist in immersing or plunging the
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the whole bodie under water. this as it stands opposed both to sprinkling and pouring according to all the observations, that I have had an opportunitie of making, appears to be the proper and distinct, the constant and invariable meaning of the word in its original greek. there are however other considerations, by attending to which a person intirely unacquainted with that language may come to the fullest satisfaction upon this article. that the baptism of John, and that of our blessed Savior, were precisely the same, so far as relates to the external action, is abundantly evident from that passage, in which it is said, that "Jesus made and *baptised* " more disciples than John," as well as from the use of the very same word in the original for the denotation of both. so that if there be any circumstances relative to the baptism of John, from which it will plainly appear to have been immersion, the same arguments will equally prove that of our Savior to have consisted in this action likewise. now we read, in the third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, that those who attended upon the preaching of John, and "confessed their sins," were "baptised of him *in* Jordan." an expression, which it seems utterly impossible to account for otherwise than by supposing them to have been dipped in that river. since had they been only sprinkled with a small portion of it's waters, they might more properly have been said to be baptised *out of* Jordan. and that both he and the person

baptised

baptised went into the river seems plainly to be implied in the use of such language. but what occasion could there have been for this, had it not been his design to immerse them? we are also told, that John “was baptising in Enon, near to Salim, “ *because* there was *much* water there;” which, had he only sprinkled his profelytes, was certainly as weak a reason, as could possibly have been assigned, since so small a quantitie in comparison would have sufficed in this case for baptising the whole jewish nation. or if we read, as some chuse to do, in this passage “many waters,” I see not how this could have been a reason for his preferring that place to others, in any sense different from that which our own translation suggests, unless we suppose, that having in this situation the advantage either of many little pools or rivulets near to one another, he might conveniently employ some of his former profelytes in baptising new ones, at the same time he himself was engaged in performing that office. but this also is evidently incompatible with supposing this rite to have consisted in sprinkling, since in that case the same advantage might as easily have been had, even though the whole country had afforded but one single rivulet or pool: in like manner, when Philip baptised the Ethiopian treasurer, it is expressly said, that they “*both went* down into the water;” and this too with some emphasis of language. “and they “went down *both* into the water, *both* Philip and

“ the eunuch.” which plainly shews, not only that Philip did in this instance really make use of immersion, else, why did they *both* go into the water, but likewise that he thought it necessarie in order to the proper administration of the ordinance. since if he had not, considering the rank and dignitie of the person he baptised, and his being then upon a journey, he would certainly have excused him from the trouble and delay that it must have occasioned. besides there are in scripture such allusions to the ceremonie of baptism, that can only be accounted for by supposing it to consist in immersion. and it is represented as being significant and expressive of such things as are indeed very naturally typified by plunging the whole bodie under water, but which bear not the least analogie to what in these later days has been so generally substituted in the room of it. thus, for example, St. Paul expressly says, that we are “ therefore
 “ *buried* with Christ by baptism, that, like as
 “ Christ was raised up from the dead by the glorie
 “ of the father, even so we also should walk in
 “ newness of life. and in the verse immediately preceding he asks, “ know ye not, that so many
 “ of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were
 “ baptised into his death?” that is, as we have it directly explained in the fifth verse of the same chapter, “ into the likeness of his death?” by which undoubtedly we are to understand a likeness in the external action here spoken of, as well as that

that similitude of obligation, which our baptism brings us under, not to “count even our lives “dear unto us” in the cause of religion, and when called upon in the order of heaven’s providence for the sake of truth and virtue to resign them. and how obvious the similitude between baptism, supposing it to be immersion, and the burial of the dead? but upon a contrarie supposition, how extremely difficult to trace out any resemblance at all? thus much may, we hope, suffice, in relation to the outward form or action itself of christian baptism.

As to the particular nature of this action, when considered and performed under the notion of a religious rite, this will be best understood by reflecting upon the design of it, and the manner, in which it is adapted to answer that design.

With respect then, in the first place, to the end which this christian institution was intended to subserve, the scripture has been very explicit in determining it to be the moral improvement of our minds and amendment of the life. how could this have been more plainly signified, than it is by St. Paul, in the words that have just now been recited. “*therefore* we are buried with Christ by baptism “into death, that like as Christ was raised up from “the dead by the glorie of the father, even so we “also should walk in newness of life.” St. Peter indeed, when speaking of baptism expresses himself thus, “be baptised everie one of you *for* the

“remission of sins.” but this, when justly understood, is so far from being a contrarie account to that given us by St. Paul of this ordinance, that it is scarcely a distinct one. and the two different views, in which it may seem to have been placed by these two apostles, are not only consistent, but in realitie inseparable: they are indeed in effect one and the same. for if baptism be instituted for our observance, that we may “walk in newness of life,” it does of course follow, that it is with respect to the design and intention of it *for* the remission of sins. and so far as it does actually produce amendment of temper and purification of life, just so far must it be actually available to the remission of them. and that for this plain reason, because such is the nature of God, such the views of his moral government, and such the declarations of sacred scripture upon this head, that between sincere repentance and humiliation on account of our sins and the pardon or remission of them there is an immediate and never-failing connexion. so that had nothing ever been said in scripture concerning the efficacie of baptism towards the obtaining a remission of our sins, such an efficacie we might most certainly and safely have ascribed to it on account of it’s tendencie towards promoting the moral puritie and improvement of the mind; these being in the government of God and in the real state of man so dependent upon and connected with each other, that whatever has in it
any

any tendencie to promote the latter must in exact proportion have a natural efficacie belonging to it towards securing the former. on the other hand, if we make St. Peter's manner of speaking to be the standard-expression upon this point, if we say with him, that baptism is *for* the remission of sins, and affix any scriptural, sound or rational meaning to our words, we do then in supposition and effect say, that it is *for* amendment of life. repentance and amendment being the necessarie ground of pardon, the one grand and ultimate condition of our receiving it, nothing can have any tendencie towards securing the remission of our sins farther than it tends to excite, quicken and perfect our repentance, nothing really effectual for our obtaining the one, but what is really effectual towards producing the other. and indeed to imagin, that forgiveness of sins is in any other way connected with baptism, than as our serious compliance with that ordinance and just improvement of it, may be the effectual means of establishing the virtue of our tempers and ensuring the integritie of our lives, to imagin, that it is for it's own sake or on account of any acceptableness, or efficacie in the thing itself, independently of it's moral views and consequences, and without any regard had to the serious disposition accompanying it, or it's purifying and reforming effects upon the mind, available for the obtaining of that forgiveness, is to represent the ordinance itself as an idle and senseless charm, and to derogate

derogate in the highest degree from the character of that supreme being, whom upon any such principle we suppose to be pleased with it. for what is it but to be pleased with trifles instead of virtue? with things, that have no influence at all upon the happiness of mankind, instead of those, that have the greatest and most extensive? St. Peter himself has long since delivered the very same sentiments upon the subject. when speaking of the ark, by which Noah and his family were saved from that general destruction, which in their days was brought upon the rest of mankind by the deluge, he says, "the like figure whereunto," or the anti-type of which "even baptism, does also now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh;" not that the mere washing with water, which can only cleanse and purifie the bodie, can ever intitle us in the sight of heaven to pardon, favor and salvation: "but the answer of a good conscience towards God;" that is, those serious resolutions for a more perfect obedience to his will, which do so exactly answer to the design of the ordinance, and such a constant and steady course of pietie and virtue as shall best correspond to such a design and to such resolutions, and even to the nature and outward form of the action itself. and therefore, when the same apostle, in the words that have been already cited, exhorts his hearers to be baptised for the remission of their sins, he connects the baptism, to which such an efficacie is imputed, with repentance.

"repent

“repent and be baptised everie one of you for the
“remission of sins.” and to the same effect is the
expression of Ananias, in the exhortation he ad-
dressed to St. Paul. “and now, why tarriest thou?
“arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins,
“calling upon the name of the Lord.” sin once
committed can never be undone, and in this sense
nothing can “wash” it “away.” but it will al-
ways be true, that such and such sins were com-
mitted, and that such and such were the persons
guiltie of them. to have our “sins washed away”
therefore, is to be in such a state and disposition of
mind as renders us the objects of the Almighty’s
favor and approbation, notwithstanding our former
offences against him. now no man can be in such
a state as this without sincere repentance and
amendment of life. nothing but this can directly
and of itself avert the divine displeasure on account
of our offences. and upon these principles the
efficacie of baptism towards washing away our sins
will be very easily discerned. so far as it is a
well-adapted means of purifying the temper and
of producing pious resolutions and virtuous habits
in the mind, it must needs be an instrument of
securing the divine forgiveness, and of conveying
all the invaluable blessings of it. and so far as it
fails, through our own neglect, as to the just use
and application of it, of producing in the mind
these moral fruits, so far must it’s efficacie towards
procuring the remission of our sins of necessitie be
impaired.

On baptism.

impaired. thus plainly have the inspired teachers of christianitie asserted the general design and ultimate end of baptism to be that improvement of temper, that increase and perfection of virtue, and that universal reformation of life and manners, which are the grand and only solid foundation, upon which to build our hope of pardon and acceptance with the Almighty.

And if we now procede to consider, in the second place, it's particular contrivance and more immediate view in subserviencie to this general and ultimate intention of it, we shall find the assertion in the strongest manner supported by the very nature and most apparent tendencie of the solemnitie itself. in which this evident and peculiar fitness for answering the ends assigned, will be the surest proof, that these were indeed the very ends proposed by the christian legislator himself in the institution of it. in illustration of this remark it is to be observed,

In the first place, that by baptism we do in the most solemn manner make profession of the christian religion, and acknowledge our belief in Christ as the great Messiah and prophet of the most high. that the ordinance was originally intended to be a distinct and solemn profession of this kind, is plain from the very words made use of by our Savior himself in appointing it, and when directing his apostles to baptise those, whom they had first taught and discipled “ in, or into the name of the father,
“ of

“ of the son and of the holie ghost,” according to the respective part, that was peculiar to each in this grand dispensation of mercie towards the children of men. the same thing is evident from the replie made by Philip to the proposal of the Ethiopian treasurer; “ see here is water; what should hinder me from being baptised? if thou believest,” says Philip, “ with all thine heart, thou mayest,” plainly implying, that, if he did not believe, he could not consistently with the true and genuin design of the ordinance be baptised. it was that particular and special solemnitie, by which Christ himself had appointed his disciples to profess their submission to his authoritie; and therefore unless he really owned that authoritie, this external rite could with no sort of significancie or proprietie have been applied to him. so that baptism according to this and many other representations given of it in the new testament is a particular and solemn manner of professing our belief in christianitie, and acknowleging the obligations, which as christians we lie under to a life of universal pietie and holiness. and by this free and voluntarie, deliberate and special act of our own we bring ourselves under the most serious and expresse engagement to fulfil these obligations. and what can be more intelligible than this account of it? or what more directly calculated than an institution of this kind for subserving all the purposes of repentance, pietie and universal charitie, which are

of such essential importance in religion, so acceptable to God, so worthie of man, and so exactly conformable likewise to the general design and ultimate views of the gospel-revelation itself? all the doctrines and precepts of christianitie have indeed a most direct and admirable tendencie to raise and cherish the sentiments of virtue and pietie in the heart of man. it is evident nevertheless, that little or no effect of this kind can be expected from them, unless they be seriously and deliberately attended to. yet here it is, that men are apt to be extremely negligent, going on from year to year in the profession of a religion, about the nature and design of which they have never perhaps employed one serious or deliberate thought. now baptism is one of those appointments of christianitie, which was in a more especial manner intended to prevent this carelessness and inattention together with their fatal train of consequences. and if we duly consider it's nature and immediate tendencie, nothing surely can appear better adapted for answering so important an end. what could have been more aptly calculated for inducing men to a serious consideration both of the evidences and of the nature of religion, and to impress upon their minds a strong, abiding sense of it's importance, than a solemnitie, which brings them to a point as to the profession of it, and which makes it to be one distinct act of their lives to recognise and own in the most solemn manner their obligations to the practice

tice of it? and as by a method like this our profession of christianitie becomes more particular, solemn and explicit, than otherwise it could have been, it must proportionably tend to invigorate our resolutions for a subsequent life of the strictest pietie and religion. this likewise being a select, appropriate action performed with so peculiar a seriousness and deliberation of mind, there will always in the case of those, who have duly complied with the appointment of it, be a certain determined period of their former lives for the memorie to fix upon, the transactions of which may with the highest advantage relative to their religious and moral interests be recollected and ever and anon reviewed. besides, as the making profession in this ordinance of so pure and holie a religion, as that of the gospel, with such peculiar circumstances of solemnitie, is our own personal and voluntarie act, it is not only to be considered as an explicit avowal of the ties resulting from the religious and christian character in general, and stipulation for complying with them, but must needs in itself likewise constitute such an additional obligation to virtue, as everie one of a truly ingenuous disposition cannot but think it his happiness to be subject to. thus then by a just and regular compliance with this institution of our Savior's do we direct our most deliberate attention to the great concerns of religion, bring ourselves under the most solemn engagements to the practice of it, increase and heighten our

moral obligations and take the most likely method, that can possibly be thought of, for invigorating our pious resolutions. and it is upon these principles, in connexion with what we have under the former particular been insisting on, that 'Tertullian at the begining of his Treatise on Baptism breaks out into admiration of it's most excellent and useful design. *felix sacramentum aquæ nostræ, qua abluti delictis pristinæ cæcitatæ in vitam æternam liberamur ! non erit otiosum* digestum istud, instruens tam eos, qui cum maxime formantur, quam et illos, qui *simpliciter* credidisse contenti, non *exploratis* rationibus traditionum, intentatam probabilem fidem per imperitiam portant. " o blessed baptismal sacrament of
 " ours, by which washed from the sins of our former blindness, we become enfranchised and commence the heirs of eternal life ! our compliance
 " with an institution like this, will surely be found
 " no trifling or insignificant matter, so happily
 " fitted as it is for accomplishing even those of
 " riper attainments as well as others, who resting
 " in the mere belief of christianity, without having ever *inquired* into the grounds and reasons of
 " their faith are exposing it to continual hazard."

And as it was absolutely necessarie, that some external ceremonie or rite should be appointed for answering these valuable ends, so it is evident that none could in the very form and nature of it have been more expressive of them or better calculated to promote them, than that, which has been actually.

ally fixed upon by the great christian legislator. thus for instance by baptism that intire renunciation of sin, which is in scripture called dying or being mortified to it, is with the greatest exactness represented. this is not only what our own observation must easily have suggested, but what St. Paul likewise has particularly insisted upon in a passage, that has been already refered to, as constituting one part in the everie-way excellent contrivance and design of this ordinance. “ know ye
“ not, that as many of us as were baptised into
“ Jesus Christ were baptised into his death”---
“ buried with him in baptism”---“ planted toge-
“ ther in the likeness of his death?” we are how-
ever by the gospel obliged, not only to forsake
evil, but to practise righteousness and do good, not
only to renounce the sins and follies of our past
lives, but in the time to come to exert ourselves
with an assiduous, active zeal in a perpetual pro-
gress towards higher attainments in virtue. and ac-
cordingly this new and more perfect life is naturally
typified and illustrated by that rising out of the
water, to which the same apostle does in his epistle
to the colossians refer, in order to point out this
very resemblance. “ buried with him in baptism,
“ wherein also you are risen with him, through
“ the faith of the operation of God, who hath
“ raised him from the dead;” that is, through
the belief of the christian religion attested by the mi-
raculous “ operations” of providence in favor of it,

particularly by the resurrection of it's author. but the idea of our christian dutie in this latter view of it is exhibited to the mind by this ordinance in a still more exact and perfect similitude. an intire immersion in water is the most effectual mode of cleansing and consequently the most significant and expressive illustration of that universal holiness, that intire freedom from the pollutions of a vain and sinful world, which the gospel so strictly enjoins, and of that perfection of moral puritie, after which it teaches us to aspire. to all which let us by no means omit to add, that the baptismal rite has in it the like apt significancie of our christian hopes, as of our christian dutie and obligations. and Tertullian, in his *Treatise de Resurrectione carnis*, c. 47. p. 354. supposes the apostle to have been particularly solicitous to point out this farther intention of it, for having cited that passage already referred to, in which he speaks of it's immediately moral uses, he adds, *at ne de ista tantum vita putes dictum, quæ ex fide per baptismum in novitate vivenda est, providentissime adstruit*, " he (the " apostle) purposely subjoins, *for, if we have been " planted together in the likeness of his death, we " shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*" had that particular rite, by our observance of which we are to make our more explicit profession of christianitie, and deliberately to bring ourselves under the engagements of religion, been much less expressive of it's own moral purposes, it would on

account of such moral uses so apparently accompanying it have been an highly expedient and valuable institution. this happy analogie however of things external with those that are divine concurring cannot but greatly heighten our idea of the excellencie and wisdom of such an appointment. and when the mind is in that particularly devout and serious frame, which the general nature of the solemnitie is so immediately and directly fitted to produce, it is not to be imagined, that a concurrence so apt and striking should fail of making the most useful impressions upon it. and thus much may, we presume, suffice for pointing out and ascertaining the general nature and design of christian baptism according to the view given of it in the sacred scriptures of the new testament.

Let us now go on to inquire, in the second place, whether we are to look upon it as an institution of a merely temporarie nature, or, on the contrarie, as intended by the great legislator himself, who appointed it, for the perpetual use and benefit of all, who should profess themselves his disciples. we have seen it to be an institution intended to answer the most valuable and important purposes with respect to the renovation of the life and the consequent remission of sins. and by attending to the nature and circumstances of the rite itself we immediately perceive it to be very happily and wisely adapted to promote them. but were such ends as these fit only to be pursued in
the

the first ages of the church? have not the children of christian profelytes as much need of every means for the moral improvement of their minds as those profelytes themselves? and may not this ordinance in particular by virtue of the general nature and tendencie of it be altogether as useful to the former as to the latter? nay, though it might be and undoubtedly was of very eminent service and advantage in this moral view at the original institution and first observance of the practice, yet, when we consider that one principal intention of it in subordination to this moral view, was to induce, and if possible, to oblige men to make their profession of christianitie with that seriousness and deliberation, without which it is not to be expected, that it's principles should have any considerable influence towards correcting their dispositions or improving their tempers, it must, I should imagin, appear, that an appointment of this kind is even more directly adapted to the circumstances of mankind in the after ages of the church, and more peculiarly fitted for usefulness to the descendants from the first profelytes to the christian faith, than can be supposed in the case of those profelytes themselves. in those days christianitie was a scheme altogether new. it was leveled in the fullest opposition against the then prevailing prejudices of mankind. and the embracing of it at that time under the public eye, did almost certainly expose to the bitterest hardships and severest persecution.

persecution. and on these accounts only it was next to impossible, that any should then openly rank themselves among the adherents of that religion without the most deliberate and serious inquiry into it's nature and credentials and a thoughtful and diligent consideration of the several obligations, which would be incumbent upon those, who should profess it. but now the case is otherwise, education is on the christian side, interest is no way hazarded by a profession of the gospel. men are therefore in these days much more likely to profess the principles of christianitie, implicitly and by rote, and without that consideration and thought, which is of such great and evident importance towards giving them their proper efficacie upon the mind. in this state then of the christian religion and of the christian world, when men, as is, alas, by too undeniable experience plain, are so apt to make profession of the gospel without ever having employed any serious or sufficient thoughts about it's evidences, nature, or obligations, a solemnitie, which necessarily occasions a pause in life, and which in the most immediate nature and tendencie of it is adapted to set men upon thinking on their religion and their dutie, must needs be peculiarly useful. and for these reasons so far am I from looking upon baptism as a temporarie ordinance designed for the use only of the primitive converts to the christian faith, that I think it, on the other hand, extremely probable,

that it must have been in the mind of the legislator himself more especially intended for the use and benefit of their descendants in every part, and to the latest ages of the world. thus much however we may, I think, safely venture to advance, that, if the baptismal rite be altogether as well suited to the present circumstances of christianitie and of it's professors, as it was to the state of things at it's first establishment in the world, if moreover it be in some respects yet more peculiarly fitted for usefulness now, it must at least have been as much intended by the christian law-giver to be the practice of his church in succeeding ages as in that of it's institution. does not the contrarie supposition carrie in it some reflexion either upon his wisdom or impartialitie in that character? whence is it, that we infer the universal extent of any gospel-rules; but from their being as applicable to the universal state of the christian world as to any particular or limited period of it? at the time, when our Lord instituted baptism he likewise appointed teaching and instruction? how know we, that this practice was to be continued among the descendants from the first converts to christianitie, but only from it's being in every respect equally well suited to the situation of things and the nature of mankind in these later as in the first and earliest days of the gospel? the same is altogether as true with respect to baptism, and, I should think therefore, must be alike conclusive in favor of it's perpetuitie?

if baptism indeed had been a merely external rite without subserving or being intended to subserve any moral purposes, this truly would have been a very sufficient reason for the discontinuance of it in the church. but then it would have been altogether as good a reason for not appointing it at all. if on the contrarie, it was in the case of those, on whom it was originally enjoined, intended to subserve religious and moral purposes and it be in everie respect as well fitted for answering these purposes in relation to ourselves as to them, it must, I think, from hence appear to have been as much designed for our use as for theirs. as much so as the Lord's Supper, and for the very same reason. with respect to this latter ordinance Mr. Emlyn, of whom I never speak but with the highest deference and honor, has very justly argued, " that in it's very
 " *nature* and *design* it must be judged to be a
 " standing ordinance of perpetual use in the chri-
 " stian church. it is, as he goes on, so far from
 " being intended for the first ages only, that quite
 " contrarie it seems *especially* designed for the use
 " of the later; for at first there was less need of
 " such a memorial, because less danger of his be-
 " ing at that time forgot by them, whose eyes had
 " beheld the tragical fact, and seen him hang in
 " agonies upon the ignominious cross; but lest in
 " another generation, which had not seen it, or
 " heard of it, when done, he should be forgotten,
 " and the obligations to him be unknown or

“ doubtful in succeeding ages, he instituted this
 “ memorial. so that it is *eminently* intended for
 “ us, on whom the ends of the world are come,
 “ who by this traditional conveyance of him as
 “ crucified in effigie, are helped mightily in this
 “ article of our christian faith, *Christ crucified*, un-
 “ to this day. the *longer* it is, since the fact was
 “ transacted, the more need there is of this me-
 “ morial, and indeed the apostle says, v. 26. (scil.
 “ I Cor. xi.) *it must be, till his coming again*. not
 “ in his spirit, for that was now accomplished;
 “ nor to destroy Jerusalem, for what was that to
 “ the church of Corinth? is there not as much
 “ need of his being remembered now as formerly?
 “ or should it *cease* before it has done being *useful*?
 “ had the bodie of christians *laid by* this institu-
 “ tion, as *some* have done, they had been *injurious*
 “ both to the memorie of our Savior, and to after-
 “ ages, by effacing this honorable *memorial* of his
 “ death.” See his excellent Sermons, No. XI.
 p. 241, 2. from our preceding reflexions it must,
 I think, appear, that the whole scope of this rea-
 soning is equally conclusive for the perpetuities of
 baptism, which according to the view given of it
 by St. Paul, in his epistle to the romans and to the
 colossians, as already referred to, may even not un-
 fitly be considered as a memorial of our Savior’s
 death. have we not then, in this passage, a suffi-
 cient answer to the author’s own *previous question*
 relative to that other institution?

Thus

Thus then, according to the best of my judgment, are we to conceive concerning the nature and design of christian baptism. and for a conclusion of the argument I would observe, that according to the doctrine of St. Paul there is but *one* baptism. “one Lord, one faith, *one* baptism, one God and father of all.” so that if what we have now been insisting upon, should be admitted as the just and true account of it, there is of course no other to be given, that can come under the same denomination. to this purpose Slichtingius, commenting upon Romans vi. 4. has expressed himself in a manner not unworthy of remark. hinc videre est baptismi ritum sic celebrandum esse, ut in illo sepulturæ quædam imago extet, id est, non levi aliqua asperzione aquæ aut effusione vel solius verticis ablutione, sed sub aquam totius corporis immersione. quod & vox ipsa baptismi evidenter docet (*aliud* enim est βαπτισμός, *aliud* πάντισμός vel περίχυσις) & ipsa praxis tam Johannis Baptistæ, quam apostolorum totiusque ecclesiæ primitivæ. posterior baptismi ritum mutare & in *aliam* firmam convertere cœpit & ausa est, postquam vel corpore invalidos, clinicos olim dictos, vel ætate inhabiles, tandem etiam infantes primum natos ad eum admisit; quasi in baptismi ritu plus situm est, quam in fide, & quasi pro infanti responderi vere possit, quod credat, aut si infans sine fide vitæ æternæ asseri possit, non multo magis possit sine baptismo, & si susceptorum sponso & responsio pro fide sit valida,

non

non simul etiam pro baptismo valida esse queat ?
 qui, *cum ritus sit*, omnem suam vim ab eo, quod
 animo fit, accipit. hoc ex ritu baptismi tolle, id est,
 fidem in Christo & sancté vivendi propositum, *ani-*
mam ejus sustuleris & *cadaver* exanime relinquas.
 “ hence we may see, that the ordinance of bap-
 “ tism ought so to be administered, as to exhibit a
 “ certain image or resemblance of a burial ; that
 “ is, not by some slight asperision of water, or ef-
 “ fusion, or washing only of the head, but by an
 “ immersion of the whole body under water.
 “ and this is what the very term, baptism, evi-
 “ dently points out (for baptism is *one* thing, and
 “ sprinkling or circumfusion *another*.) as like-
 “ wise the practice itself, both of John the Bap-
 “ tist, and of the apostles and primitive church.
 “ the church of later date has been bold enough
 “ to alter and to convert into *another* form, the
 “ baptismal rite, by admitting to it, persons of in-
 “ firm health, heretofore called clinics, or those of
 “ incompetent age, and at length the merest in-
 “ fants ; as if the mere outward ceremonie itself
 “ of baptism were of more avail than faith, or as
 “ if any one could safely answer for the faith of
 “ the infant, or as if an infant, though it may be
 “ intitled to eternal life without faith, might not
 “ much more be intitled to it without baptism, or,
 “ as if the sponsors vouching and answering for
 “ it's faith, might not as well do the same for
 “ baptism ; which, *being in itself a mere external*
 “ rite,

“ *rite*, must needs derive all it’s efficacie from
 “ what passes in the *mind*. take this from bap-
 “ tism, namely, faith in Christ, and a purpose of
 “ holy living, and you destroy the very *life and*
 “ *soul* of it, and have nothing but a dead *carcase*
 “ remaining.” so again, animadverting upon the
 third verse of the same chapter his language is as
 follows; baptizari in Christum, est baptizari in id,
 ut Christi sis discipulus, & nomen ejus profitearis,
 atque ad id faciendum te baptismo obligare. bap-
 tismus enim in Christum est sacramentum quoddam
 christianorum, quo sese Christo obstringunt, ideoque
 baptismum suscepturi publicam Christi nominis pro-
 fessionem faciunt; Satanæ, mundo, peccato renun-
 ciant, Christo autem sese addicunt. “ to be bap-
 “ tised into Christ is to be baptised for this end;
 “ that thou mayest be his disciple and profess his
 “ name, and by baptism avowedly oblige thyself to
 “ this. for baptism into Christ is a certain ordi-
 “ nance among christians, by which they bind them-
 “ selves to Christ, and therefore, when complying
 “ with it, they make a public profession of his
 “ name, they renounce Satan, the world and sin,
 “ and devote themselves to Christ.” he imme-
 diately adds, hinc videmus baptismi ritum christi-
 anis *neutiquam* esse *negligendum*, dummodo & ab
 illis suscipiatur, qui *intelligunt* quid sit Christi dis-
 cipulum ac servum esse, ideoque in *animo* & *pro-*
posito habeant; & ut eo *modo* suscipiatur, quo par
 est, quoque ab ipsis apostolis administratus, & ab
 eorum discipulis, imo ab ipso Christo, cum bap-
 zaretur,

zaretur, usurpatus fuit. eo, inquam, modo, qui
aptus est ad significandum, quod baptismus *signifi-*
care debet. “ from hence we may infer, that
 “ baptism is by *no* means to be *neglected* by *chri-*
 “ *stians*, supposing those engaged in it to be such
 “ as *understand* what it is to be a disciple and a
 “ servant of Christ, and that they have this in the
 “ purpose and *intention* of their hearts; and sup-
 “ posing it likewise to be performed in a proper
 “ manner and according to the *mode*, in which it
 “ was administered by the apostles themselves and
 “ their disciples; and which was made use of even
 “ by our Lord himself, when he was baptised; the
 “ mode, I say, so expressive of that, which baptism
 “ ought to signify.” Vid. Slichting. in Epistol.
 ad Romanos, Op. ap. Fratres Polonos, T. I.
 p. 210. reversely however if there be any other
 practice, besides that which I have now been
 pleading for, that can truly and justly be called
 christian baptism, then what I have been repre-
 senting as such, must be given up, as having
 no claim to be considered under the notion of a
 christian ordinance. for the scripture no where
 speaks of two different practices either of which we
 may complie with as christian baptism and yet be
 equally in the right. it is in this light I mean,
 that the matter appears to me. but God forbid,
 that I should dictate to the judgment of any one.
 that is baptism, christian baptism to everie man in
 particular, which he himself thinks to be so after
 impartial inquirie and examination made. and
 however

however different his opinion upon that subject may be from mine I no more condemn him on account of that difference, than I do myself. let “ everie man” be conscientiously perswaded in his own mind ; and then whether he thinks the baptism of the adult or the sprinkling of an infant to be the institution of Christ, or whether he thinks, that both of them may come under that denomination, or on the contrarie, that neither of them have any title to it, I am readie with open arms to “ receive “ him as a brother in the Lord” and to communicate with him in everie other ordinance of the gospel.

C H A P. V.

On the Lord's supper.

BOOK IV.

THAT virtue, by which we become acceptable in the sight of God, consists not in one single transient action, or in making an entrance merely on the path of goodness it prescribes, but in the settled habit of the mind, and it's continued progress towards higher and still higher attainments in what is moral and divine. and to this there is something very happily and beautifully corresponding in those external or positive institutions that are peculiar to the gospel. by baptism we are to make our entrance upon the life of virtue, the life of reason, the life of christianitie, the life of God, in such a manner as is most likely to impress our minds with a sense of all it's high, important obligations. and by an habitual attendance upon the Lord's supper with still increasing piety of affection and ardor of love we are taking the most effectual means by which we may be enabled to fulfil them amidst the surrounding temptations and snares of the present world. and in both these ordinances, especially when considered in this relation,

tion, which they bear to each other, and that close connexion there is subsisting between them, much of the admirable wisdom of our divine legislator is apparent. notwithstanding that infinite preference, that is universally and forever to be given to the duties of essential moralitie, in comparison of those religious injunctions relating only to some external rite, yet in everie well-adapted institution of religion something of this latter kind must of necessity be introduced. otherways there would not be in it condescension enough to that frailtie and imperfection of human nature, which always did, and ever must during our abode in the present state, need to be assisted by somewhat of this sort. christianitie therefore, so far from being the less perfect on account of it's positive institutions, as some have absurdly imagined, must needs appear for this very reason to be so much the more completely and exactly accommodated to the intire nature of man; to it's weakness as well as to it's dignitie. but, why do I talk of weakness? it is true, our inattention to religious and moral concerns; our inaptitude to converse with subjects of this kind, involved as we generally are in so great a multiplicitie of secular affairs, cannot but render such external memento's and assistances, as those we have been speaking of, highly expedient and necessarie in order to our feeling in it's proper force and energie the influence of religious and christian truths upon our minds. since these, however ex-

cellent in themselves and efficacious in their own nature, can no other ways produce their genuine fruits in the human heart and temper, than by the intervention of our own diligent, serious and affectionate meditation upon them. and so far the ordinance of the Lord's supper is adapted to the weakness of human nature. but then on account of those grand and interesting discoveries, those amiable and exalted views of the divine majesty, those principles of sacred truth so cherishing and invigorating of every human virtue, which it exhibits, and with which angels themselves are delightfully conversing, it furnishes the noblest employment for all the most generous affections and elevated powers of the human soul. so that, as some external rites were in a manner necessary in order to the completion of the christian scheme, it must, I think, upon due consideration appear, that none could have been more wisely fixed upon or have done it a greater honor, than those of baptism and the supper of our Lord. this is an observation, that has, I hope, been made sufficiently evident with respect to the former in our preceding chapter. and it is what we shall here attempt in relation to the latter by a more distinct illustration of the general sentiments we have hinted at in these introductory remarks. and in order to this nothing more seems necessary than to give some brief representation of the nature and design of the ordinance itself, and of the many excellent purposes

poses it is adapted to answer, and then to specify those dispositions and affections of mind, with which it is on our part to be attended upon in just correspondence to these intentions of the ordinance itself, and which consequently it must be calculated to cherish and improve.

First then with respect to the nature and design of this ordinance itself and the many excellent uses it is adapted to answer. and for our satisfaction here, what can we better do than appeal directly to the words of immediate institution, "this do in remembrance of me?" a plain, but very far from being an insipid account of it. for surely it is not a mere formal recollection of our Savior's appearance at a particular period upon earth, and of the things he did or suffered whilst conversant amongst mankind, that can here be meant, but the remembering with certain warm and fervent affections of soul his humble birth, the great and grievous sorrows he underwent through life, his perfect pattern, his divine discourses, his dying agonies, his wonderful love and condescension, his matchless grace and compassion in all these instances so eminently displayed; the glorious privileges, the rich inestimable benefits of his gospel, his present exaltation at the right hand of God, his friendly intercession there, and designed appearance upon earth to judge mankind. it is a memorial-ordinance exhibiting not an historical tablature merely, but a devotional and moral picture containing those sublime

sublime and interesting representations, that are in the best manner adapted to fill, to enlarge, to elevate, to quicken, to exhilarate the soul of man. thus then it appears, in the first place, that the ordinance of the Lord's supper is in general an affectionate remembrance of our redeemer.

We add, secondly, as another general characteristic of this ordinance, that it is a social remembrance of him. the form and manner, in which by virtue of the original command appointing it we are to remember him, is of this sort. it is in all respects the resemblance of our social meals. in one common place, at one common time, we partake of the same bread and drink of the same wine. this is a circumstance or view of the ordinance, that has been particularly taken notice of by St. Paul. "the cup of blessing, which we "bless," he says, "is it not the communion," or joint-participation "of the blood of Christ;" in the emblems or memorials of his dying blood? "the bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the bodie of Christ;" a joint participation likewise in the symbolical representation of his flesh torn and broken in his crucifixion for our sakes, among the several communities of the christian church, or bodie, by which they all in common own and recognise their relation to one and the same spiritual head? "for, as the apostle goes "on, we being many," or though many, "are all "partakers of that one bread:" and in our being so

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we have a natural emblematic representation of the unitie of the christian church. and with a view to this particular notion of the ordinance it is, that the same apostle thought it necessarie expressly to injoin it upon the corinthians, who had fallen into many irregularities in attending upon it, and among others, as from his manner of addressing them we may presume, that of not staying for one another in partaking of the elements, till the whole congregation could be got together and unite in the celebration of it: he thought it necessarie, I say, directly to injoin it upon them, that, "when they came to eat," that is, to partake of the Lord's supper, "they should tarrie one for another." from all which we may, I think, very certainly conclude it to have been expressly in the design of the original institutor, our Lord himself, that a circumstance of this kind should always attend this solemn commemoration of his death and passion, and of all his transactions in behalf of mankind; of all the benefits and glorious privileges, which we have derived from his appearance upon earth in the character of our redeemer.

But, thirdly, this ordinance was intended, according to what has been already hinted in our introductory reflexions, to be not only an affectionate and a social, but also a frequent commemoration of our Savior's love. this is sufficiently intimated by St. Paul, or rather indeed it is the very language of our Savior himself, as recorded by that apostle, in the

the institution of it. "this do ye, as oft as ye
 "drink it, in remembrance of me." and according to what is generally observed to have been the practice of the primitive church, this intended repetition in the administration of the ordinance by one and the same assemblie of christian believers, was in those early days of christianitie looked upon to be a very frequent one. nay, from the historie itself of the acts of the apostles it appears, that among the very first converts to christianitie, everie Lord's day, and not one only out of four or five, was a communion-day. "upon the first day of
 "the week, when the disciples came together to
 "break bread, Paul preached unto them." does not the manner of expression seem evidently to implicate, that "breaking bread," or the celebration of the Lord's supper, was one of the stated solemnities of that day?

Fourthly, this ordinance is a very natural, expressive and lively representation both of the privileges, which we derive from the gospel, and of the duties which are incumbent on us as the professors of it. what can more naturally exhibit to our thoughts it's admirable efficacie towards feeding and nourishing, sustaining and quickening the divine life in the soul of man, or the chearing influences of religion upon the mind, than those elements of bread and wine, of which in the celebration of it we partake? "bread," as it is expressed in the scripture, "strengthens man's heart;"
 and

and “ wine makes glad the heart.” and in like manner as these external elements do thus cheer and strengthen the animal frame, are the doctrines of the gospel calculated to invigorate and refresh the soul. but as in this ordinance, the happy tendency of the principles themselves contained in the gospel towards keeping alive and carrying on to perfection in the mind of man the habits of virtue and universal goodness is so expressively represented, it is not at all less significant of that duty, which is incumbent on our part in order to our feeling this vital power and quickening energy of christian truth. the bread and the wine are not only set before us as emblems of the privileges and benefits of the gospel, which we are seriously to contemplate, but we actually partake of them. “ take, eat ye all of it,” and “ drink ye all of it,” is the style, in which the institution runs. and this is a circumstance not only heightening the solemnity of the transaction in general, but naturally calculated in particular to remind us of the necessity of applying these great truths to our own hearts by serious, deliberate and lively meditation; without which never can we experience their power in cherishing and exalting the habits of virtue, notwithstanding the admirable tendency of the truths themselves towards so happy an effect. and whilst it thus reminds us of our duty in this particular, it is at the same time a most efficacious means or

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instrument of performing it. for what can we imagin more directly fitted for exciting in our minds the most devout and affectionate contemplation of the love of the great redeemer in dying for our sakes, than the bread broken, the wine poured and both actually given to everie communicant in the celebration of this ordinance? and finally, what can we suppose to have been our Savior's farther end in appointing the memorial of this love to be celebrated after the social manner we have been speaking of, but that by such an ordinance, while reminded of the unspeakable obligations we are under to his condescending grace, and to the adorable compassions of the sovereign Deitie so richly displayed in the dispensation of the gospel, we might be put upon recollecting likewise after the most serious manner those offices of universal charitie, which in imitation of this heavenly love and these divine compassions we are so strongly bound to exercise towards one another?

And now from these several considerations taken together it cannot I think, but appear to be an ordinance most wisely and happily adapted for subserving all the moral purposes of the intire gospel-system, and for promoting after the most efficacious manner it's supreme and ultimate end. it cannot therefore with any tolerable proprietic or consistencie be lightly thought of by those, who have a just regard to that end itself. on the contrarie,

contrarie, it must surely by all such be estimated as constituting a very valuable and highly useful part of the christian institution. it is possible, that had our Saviour himself never appointed such a solemnity to be observed by the professors of his religion in everie age, christian gratitude might have suggested something of the kind. but certainly there is a peculiar aptitude to usefulness in an ordinance of this sort, that is expressly appointed by the great legislator himself in the christian church, and which therefore we cannot either with decencie flight, or without having the most reverential sense of his authority excited in our minds and of the obligations, which we lie under to a universal compliance with it, attend upon. and, if, notwithstanding this provision made in the christian scheme itself for securing among the professors of christianity a regular and lively recollection of it's great truths and principles, these truths and principles are after all so seldom recollected and with so little seriousness or fervor of devotion contemplated, what would have been the case, had no such solemnity been appointed? or how can we look upon the institution of it as superfluous? and thus much might perhaps have sufficed for illustrating the nature and design of this ordinance and the admirable uses it was originally intended to answer and is in fact so wisely and happily adapted to subserve.

By specifying however yet more distinctly those dispositions and affections of mind, with which an ordinance like this must needs on our part be attended upon in order to a just correspondence with it's design we shall become still more clearly apprehensive of it's admirably useful tendencie, these of course being the affections, which it must be calculated to cherish and improve.

First then, I observe, that we cannot with any tolerable consistencie attend upon this ordinance without indulging the sentiments of a most sincere and fervent gratitude. gratitude to the supreme, eternal father of mercies, who sent his son into the world, that he might be the "bread
" of life" to mankind, that by the admirable maxims and great truths of his religion he might feed and nourish in their souls those habits of virtue, in the possession and cultivation of which consists our assured meetness for the felicities and glories of an heavenly and immortal world, and that "by his blood" they might be "redeem-
" ed;" not by corruptible things such as "silver
" and gold, but by the pretious blood of the
" lamb, without blemish and without spot, who
" verily was fore-ordained before the foundation
" of the world, but was manifest in these last
" times for us, who by him do believe in God,
" who raised him from the dead, and gave him
" glorie, that our faith and hope might be in
" God." and surely in such a solemnitie the grace of the redeemer himself will not, cannot, be

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CHAP. V.

be forgotten; who, "though he was rich," yet for our sakes did voluntarily, in the fulness of his benevolence and the tenderness of his compassion, "become poor" who in compliance with the gracious counsels that had by eternal love and wisdom been formed for the salvation of the human race, visited this world below, and who, during the whole of his abode on earth was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." or can we indeed see the memorials of his crucified body, can we have presented to our eyes the lively emblem of his streaming blood, that blood he so willingly shed upon the cross in order to become our ransom and deliverer, and feel no emotions of gratitude and praise, of esteem or love on account of such wonderful condescension?

But besides these grateful sentiments of mind on account of the particular privileges and benefits, which we ourselves have received from the gospel, we cannot with any propriety attend upon this ordinance without a pious admiration likewise of the universal love and goodness of the great father of all. the gospel was so rich, so glorious, so inexpressibly great a gift bestowed upon mankind, that by means of it our ideas in general of the divine goodness, of the exuberance and universalitie of the divine love, have been in a very high degree confirmed, enlarged and elevated. and this is an observation distinctly specified in the sacred records themselves

BOOK IV. themselves of our christian faith. "he," saith the apostle, "who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" what doubt can we possibly entertain of the overflowing, the infinitely diffusive and unchangeable loving-kindness of the supreme, eternal deitie, who in those privileges, which as christians we enjoy, and in that "great salvation," which has been wrought out for mankind by Jesus Christ has given us so signal a demonstration of it? whenever therefore we have Jesus Christ "evidently set forth," as the apostle in speaking of this very topic, has expressed it, "and crucified among us," in those lively sacramental emblems of his sufferings and death exhibited in the holie supper, with what warmth and elevation of mind should our thoughts expatiate upon this universal, unchangeable goodness of the supreme, everlasting deitie, "who would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowlege of the truth?" nor let us here by any means omit to observe, that it was among the primitive christians a custom, to consider the elements of *bread* and *wine* in this ordinance, as being, and that too according to the original intention of the institutor, a kind of *first fruits* or solemn *oblation* made in acknowledgement of the divine goodness in the creation of our world, and in those supplies and accommodations of the animal life, for which we are daily indebted to it. so says Irenæus

Irenæus in particular, adv. hæres. l. iv. c. xxxii. p. 323. suis discipulis dans (scil. Christus) consilium, *primitias* Deo offerre, ex suis creaturis, non quasi indigenti, sed ut ipsi nec infructuosi, nec ingrati sint, eum, qui ex creatura est panis, accepit & gratias egit, dicens *hoc est corpus meum*, & calicem similiter, quæ est ex ea creatura, quæ est secundum nos, suum sanguinem confessus est, & novi testamenti novam docuit *oblationem*, quam *Ecclesia* ab *apostolis* accipiens, in universo mundo offert Deo, ei qui alimenta nobis præstat, *primitias* suorum munerum in novo testamento. and to the same purpose Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue p. 220. observes, that our blessed Savior appointed the eucharistical bread, as a memorial of his own sufferings, and
“ that we might at once give thanks to God, who
“ created this world and all things in it for the
“ sake of man, as well as for that deliverance from
“ wickedness and sin, and that total destruction of
“ principalities and powers by these sufferings
“ effected.”

Again, thirdly, whenever we approach the table of the Lord in order to celebrate this divine goodness, particularly that illustrious display, that has been made of it in the scheme of our redemption by Jesus Christ, we must surely be bound, according to the most obvious tenor and essential meaning of such an ordinance, to do it with the deepest penitence and contrition on account of those miscarriages and offences that have so sadly tainted our
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former lives. this ordinance indeed is often considered, and by the apostle himself represented under the notion of a solemn spiritual feast. and "a feast" we know "is made for laughter." but then it is only "the sorrow of the world, that worketh death," producing calamitie and distress of everie kind, and sometimes literally hastening on the attacks of death itself. but godly sorrow, as the apostle terms it in the passage referred to, fails not to produce that ingenuous repentance, which, however distressing and painful it may be for the present, is sure to terminate in the peaceable, the joyful, the triumphant fruits of righteousness. and even in the immediate exercise it so approves itself to the mind and to all it's best affections, as cannot but render it highly satisfactorie and refreshing. nor to any particular instance within the whole scope of the virtuous life is that so just observation more strictly applicable than to these sorrows of repentance; namely, that "the very *disturbances*, which belong to natural affection, though they may be thought wholly contrary to pleasure, yield still a *contentment* and *satisfaction* greater than the pleasures of indulged sense. and where a series or continued succession of the tender and kind affections can be carried on, even through fears, horrors, sorrows, griefs; the emotion of the soul is still agreeable. we continue pleased even with this *melancholie* aspect or sense of virtue." See an

Inquiry

Inquiry concerning virtue, Book II. Part II. §. 1. CHAP. V.
p. 70. and when can we have a more natural occasion given us for these sorrows of the penitent and contrite soul, than when assembled around the sacred, christian altar, on purpose to celebrate that grace we have so little improved, so much “ de-
“ spised,” and to commemorate that “ blood of
“ the covenant,” which was shed upon the cross for our sakes, but which nevertheless by our sins running so directly counter to the tenor of that covenant, and to the design, for which “ the blood
“ of it” was shed, namely the removal of sin, we have in effect “ counted an unholie thing?” and as such penitential views as these have a necessarie reference to the miscarriages of our former lives, and can indeed have but little meaning in them, farther than they are founded upon some degree of an accurate judgment formed, in relation to the state of our own minds and to our own moral frailties and imperfections, a solemnitie calculated to excite them must of course be well-adapted for leading us into a juster acquaintance with ourselves and for assisting us in that best and wisest exercise, that most useful and salutarie discipline, the examination and scrutinie of our own temper and affections.

But let it be yet farther observed, in the fourth place, that we cannot with any propriety engage in the celebration of this ordinance, unless it be in the spirit of universal charitie. the very outward

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form of this solemnity, as we have seen, by which we are to commemorate the love and grace of our compassionate redeemer, is peculiarly fitted for reminding us after the most striking and sensible manner of the obligations, which we lie under to cultivate this spirit of universal benevolence. and this in exactest agreement with the nature and genius of that religion, the blessings of which we do by attending upon it profess most gratefully to receive. for "the end of the commandment," or christian institution, "is charity." and from the divinest spirit of love, even the love of God himself, and of him, who is the brightest image of his sovereign glories, have we derived these invaluable privileges. and this very love it is, that in this ordinance we profess to celebrate and adore. what a peculiar inconsistency then and impropriety of conduct must there be in coming to it with any the smallest tincture of uncharitableness in our own temper and disposition? particularly it is to be observed, that in this ordinance we celebrate the praises of a forgiving God; we commemorate a dying Savior, who, when expiring upon the cross, prayed in the spirit of highest meekness and tenderest compassion for those, who had fixed him there, and thus in their behalf addressed his God; "father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." how then can we attend upon it without the most flagrant contradiction in our tempers to its genuine design, if bringing along
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with us any degree of an implacable and bitter spirit towards those, who may have offended us? can we with really sincere affections and in a manner so distinct and solemn magnifie and extol that forgiving mercie of heaven, that has been so signally displayed in the dispensation of the gospel? can we, during the course of the sacred exercise, have our most serious thoughts employed in admiring this compassionate and forgiving spirit, that so divinely animated the Savior in his dying moments, and gave so sweet a fragrancie to his latest breath, and yet not perceive the shameful, horrid incongruitie of indulging at the same time in our own breasts the spirit of rancor and revenge? not blush and be confounded at it? not with an holie indignation and self-abhorrence resolve upon correcting it?

But these are reflexions, which naturally lead us to observe in yet farther illustration of the topic before us, that in the celebration of this ordinance, if attending upon it with any tolerable propriety of disposition, it is scarce possible for us to avoid engaging ourselves by the most deliberate and solemn vows, purposes and resolutions to a more exact conformitie in the future part of our lives to the sentiments and maxims of that religion, which we profess. it is an ordinance very justly spoken of, and indeed according to the language of our Savior himself in the institution of it, when he says, "this cup is the new testament," or cove-

nant, "in my blood," as a fœderal rite; as a solemnity, in which not only the great covenant of religion as founded upon the divine perfections is in the general idea of it after the most lively manner exhibited to our view, but in which likewise we who attend upon it, are each to bind ourselves by the most express engagements, by everie the most serious, sacred, endearing tie, to a life of absolute devotedness to God, of universal and fervent love to man. and surely, as Dr. Scott expresses it, in his Christian Life, Part III. c. ii. Vol. IV. p. 213, 14, 15. "it is worth observing, how
 " much care Christ has taken in the very *constitution*
 " of his religion, to oblige us to a constant
 " repetition of our vows and good purposes. for
 " at our first *entrance* into covenant with him, we
 " are to be *baptized*; in which solemnity we do
 " *renounce* the devil and all his works, and religiously *devote* ourselves to his service; but because we are apt to *forget* our vows, and the
 " matter of it is *continually* to be performed, and
 " more than one world doth depend upon it,
 " therefore he hath thought fit not to trust to our
 " first *engagement*, but so to methodize our religion, that we should ever and anon be obliged
 " to give him *new security*. for which end he has
 " instituted this *other sacrament*, which is not like
 " that of *baptism* to be received by us once for all,
 " but is to be often *repeated*, that so at every *return* of it we might be obliged again to renew
 " our

“ our old vows of obedience. and doubtless
“ would we but follow this good design of our
“ *Saviour* we should be far more successful in our
“ *religion* than we are. for till we come to a *con-*
“ *firmed state* of goodness, our holy fervour will
“ be very apt to *cool*, our good purposes to *slacken*
“ and unwind, and our virtuous endeavours to
“ *languish* and grow *weary*: so that unless we *re-*
“ *vive* our religion by frequent *restoratives*, in a
“ little time it will *faint* and dye away. where-
“ fore to keep it *alive*, it is very necessary that we
“ should come to our great master's table every
“ time we are invited by the solemn returns of
“ this *holy festival*, that here we may *renew* our
“ vows, and *reinvigorate* our resolutions, and *re-*
“ *pair* our decays, and put our sluggish graces into
“ a *new fermentation*. and if we would thus
“ *frequently* communicate with a due *preparation*
“ of mind, we should doubtless at every sacrament
“ acquire *new* life and vigor, and our *good resolu-*
“ *tions* would every day get ground of our *bad*
“ *inclinations*, till at last they had totally *subdued*
“ them.”

Such then are the more particular sentiments and views, which this ordinance, consequently to the general idea and ultimate design of it, and by virtue of it's most essential tendencie and import, is so immediately calculated to inspire, that it cannot even with any consistencie or proprietic be attended upon without them. and if so, it must surely appear

pear to be an ordinance replete with moral meaning, an ordinance of highest religious efficacie and force. not a single excellencie or virtue is there of the divine life, which it does not in it's most inviting and attractive colors display, not a single motive inducing to the cultivation and exercise of such a virtue, which it does not in the most persuasive form of address inculcate upon our recollection. it is therefore an ordinance of most admirable utilitie in the christian life, an ordinance reflecting the highest honor upon the wise and gracious legislator, who appointed it, and calculated for affording inexpressible delight and pleasure to every serious and well-affected mind.

C H A P. VI.

On the moral duties peculiar to the gospel.

THOUGH there are certain obligations, ^{CHAP. VI.} which we lie under to all mankind, whatever may be their merit in a moral estimation, yet a great part of our dutie evidently consists in treating particular persons with a special regard to the peculiar character belonging to them according to the moral standard. and besides that general law of benevolence to be exercised towards all with whom we are conversant, whose happiness it may be any way in our power to promote, or whose miseries to relieve, there is gratitude to be exercised towards the benefactor, forgiveness towards the injurious and the enemy, fidelitie towards those, who have reposed their confidence in us, justice to those with whom we deal, reverence and honor to our superiors, condescension and humilitie towards those of rank inferior to ourselves, and the like. and as our acquaintance with mankind or with other reasonable and moral agents is enlarged, our obligations of this kind are multiplied in proportion.

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and on this account the principles of christianitie have laid a foundation for several moral duties, which could not possibly have had any place in the system of natural religion alone, as the knowledge of the very beings or persons themselves, to whom these duties are owing, is absolutely peculiar to the gospel. this knowledge being once communicated, the duties themselves result of course from the general sentiments and obligations of moralitie as founded in nature and discovered by the immediate exercise and original light of reason. thus, for example, when the character of the great redeemer of mankind, his amiable, spotless character and the relation he stands in to ourselves are once made known to any morally-reflecting being, there are certain affections, which such a being cannot but look upon as naturally founded upon our acquaintance with such a character and upon such a relation subsisting between him and us and on our parts recognised, and the want of them, as a sure indication of moral depravities, even though these duties had not been particularly specified in the religious institution, by which these discoveries are made. but, if they are, moreover, expressly inculcated and distinctly insisted upon in that very institution or revelation itself, then must the importance of such duties be heightened in a degree exactly answering to the evidence we have of a divine authority enforcing that institution. this
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now is in fact the case with respect to the duties and obligations incumbent upon us relatively to our Lord Jesus Christ, that great illustrious being, the discoverie of whose character and offices makes the principally constituent part of the christian revelation. and such, I believe, has been the accuracie of the scriptures upon this head, that there is not any one dutie naturally resulting from these discoveries, which is not exprefsly made the matter of an evangelical injunction. nay, there is one single passage, such is the comprehensiveness, as well as accuracie, of these sacred writings, that will be found perhaps to include them all. it is that I mean of St. Peter. “whom
“having not seen ye love, in whom, though
“now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce
“with joy unspeakable and full of glorie.” be this however as it may, we will procede to specify in the first place these duties themselves, and then to point out some reflexions naturally arising from the consideration and survey of them. and the first, that I mention, is that of gratitude. a dutie, which, as a species of love, must undoubtedly be implied in the eulogium or commendation referred to and given by St. Peter to the “strangers scattered throughout Galatia, Cappadocia,
“Asia and Bithynia;” “whom, though ye
“have not seen, ye love.” though they had never been the immediate, personal witnesses of his appearance and transactions here upon earth,

their hearts nevertheless were overflowing with an ingenuous and fervent gratitude, on account of those signal benefits, which he came among us to confer: a dutie owing to all intelligent and moral agents in proportion to the services they have done us, and the benefits we have received from their benevolence and good-will: a dutie, which we cannot even in the smallest instance violate without bringing a manifest opprobrium upon our natures; so evidently is it founded upon the immediate, strongest dictates of humanitie: a dutie, the wilful and deliberate violation of which in the case of our best, most faithful and generous benefactors, must needs implicate the foulest depravities and almost total perversion of moral temper. and can it then be an affection, of which we may be absolutely destitute with respect to our divine and heavenly friend, the great redeemer, and yet be innocent? is it a disposition, in relation to which we may in this case be so much as indifferent without incurring very heinous guilt? if gratitude be due in proportion to the benefits we have received, and the malignities of ingratitude in the same proportion increased, how dreadful must be the guilt implied in our want of this affection towards that glorious being, who came into the world, not to bestow upon us some transient, momentary good, and relative alone to this earthly scene of being, but to accomplish the salvation of our immortal souls? should a man
“ gain

“gain the whole world,” according to the maxim inculcated by this merciful Savior himself, “and yet lose his own soul, what would it profit him?” by paritie of reason we may ask, should any one bestow upon us the propertie and dominion of the whole world, “what would it profit?” how mean and insignificant would be the favor done us in comparison of those saving benefits, that have been conferred upon mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ? how inexpressibly great then must be our obligations to him? how heinous our guilt in not attending to them? how much more aggravated still, if we can allow ourselves to entertain any thing like a despicable or slighting idea of them?

But, secondly, there is not only a love of gratitude due to our blessed Savior, but likewise a love of esteem and complacencie. “whom having not seen we love;” the language must surely mean, not only on account of the benefits we ourselves have received from him, but in high admiration of his sublimely generous, his great, his glorious, godlike character. a character, which could not but justly and naturally have demanded this tribute, even though we ourselves had never in particular been the objects of his love. it is observed in scripture, that our Saviour “took not on him the nature of angels in order to act in qualitie of Savior and Redeemer towards those infernal spirits, who had been once angels of light.

but had he done this, and had such wonderful love by any means been reveled to us, should we not by the most apparent obligations have been bound, in the sentiments of fervent esteem and highest complacencie to admire and to extol it independently of any favors, that we ourselves might likewise have received from him, or supposing that we were not in fact indebted to him for any? and indeed, if we are feeling no delight in the inherent, essential excellencies of his character, abstracted from any particular benefits, that we ourselves may have derived from his matchless benevolence and love, justly may we suspect the ingenuitie and disinterestedness of any grateful sentiments we may be pretending to or presume ourselves possessed of on account of those benefits. we may rather look upon the temper, which we so denominate, as a kind of selfish satisfaction taken in the privileges and honorable distinctions, which, as his disciples, we so eminently enjoy, than as the emotions of a truly grateful, and ingenuous spirit. and it would be, methinks, a pleasing, and surely not unprofitable employment of our thoughts, the happier trial rather of the puritie, simplicitie and integritie of our own dispositions, to contemplate the virtues of the great redeemer in all their intrinsic exalted excellence, omitting for a while in our meditations the thought of his being our own benefactor, friend and Savior; and then to ask ourselves, can I forbear
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to venerate this glorious being? do I feel my self delighted with the transcendently great and lovely qualities of his adorable nature? am I not, at least ought I not, to be transported, elevated, and the generous affections of my mind enlarged, in the contemplation of so much goodness, of so much condescension, friendship and compassion, all conspiring to form a character of such illustrious merit? and if this would be the language naturally dictated to us by the complacencie, which we could not but take in the excellencies of such a character, even independently of any grateful sense entertained of our own immediate obligations to him or personal share in the benefits he has conferred upon mankind, how strong, how fervent ought to be our love arising from both these principles in conjunction!

Thirdly, another dutie, which we owe to the Lord Jesus, is that of intire trust and confidence in him with respect to the great concerns of our eternal welfare. nor shall we find this to have been a dutie omitted by St. Peter, in the passage we have referred to, if we advert only to what the original word there rendered "believing," is known not unfrequently to import. that the persons, to whom this epistle is addressed, were real believers in Christ, in his divine mission and authoritie, is evidently implied or rather necessarily supposed in the character previously given of them, as "lovers" of Jesus. it would therefore have
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been altogether superfluous to have mentioned it afterwards; not now to insist upon the querie, how far a mere speculative assent to the truths of the gospel could with any propriety have been spoken of at all as a moral obligation, or as constituting any part in the excellencie of a moral character? the passage then is undoubtedly to be read as follows; "whom having not seen ye love, "in whom, though now," though still, ye see him not, "yet confiding," that is reposing an intire and absolute trust in him in relation to the concerns and welfare both of your own and others souls, "ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full "of glorie." it has in a former part of this treatise, viz. Book. II. c. vi. been shewn at large, that the redeemer is now exalted "at the right hand of God" to the high office of being the great dispenser of eternal life and happiness to the children of men, that one illustrious mediator, through whose hands and by whose instrumentalitie the supreme creator and Lord of universal nature transmits to all the good and virtuous of mankind those rich, unspeakable, immense and everlasting rewards, which in his own free and infinite benevolence he has determined to bestow upon them. so that not to trust in Christ for salvation, is offering at once the most direct and manifest affront both to Jesus himself and to his God and father. it is to suspect the fidelitie of our redeemer. it is to suppose him false and treacherous in executing that high office,

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to which he has been appointed. and it implies yet farther a defect either of goodness or of wisdom in that supreme deitie himself, who has invested him with it; and is in effect presumptuously to charge him with having entrusted the great affair of our everlasting happiness in the hands of one, that was capable of betraying us. but “we have,” as the author of the epistle to the hebrews observes, “a *faithful*,” as well as a “merciful high-priest” “in things pertaining to God.” and if an intire and chearful confidence in any of our fellow-creatures, to whose management and direction, in consequence of the good opinion entertained by us of their characters, we have committed any particular interest of our own, be a debt of respect and honor, that is naturally due to their integritie, how much stronger must be the obligation incumbent on us, not to be wanting in the same respect and honor, that must be owing in an inexpressibly higher degree to the great “mediator of the better covenant;” to him, whom “God the father” has “sealed;” appointed and ordained to be the giver of eternal life?” and how justly was it made the language of prophesie, “blessed are all they, who put “their trust in him?”

But, fourthly, another dutie founded upon the discoveries, that have been made to us concerning the character and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, and mentioned likewise in that so remarkably comprehensive passage of St. Peter’s cited at the beginning of
of

of this chapter, is that of "rejoicing in him." this may seem indeed perhaps rather to denote the privilege of those, to whom he was addressing himself than their dutie, and to express the full satisfaction and triumphant joy of their minds in the glorious benefits, that had been conferred upon them by the Savior rather than to intimate any moral obligation, with which he supposed them to be complying. but I apprehend, that this latter must be at least included in the language he makes use of, "rejoicing in Christ Jesus with joy unspeakable and full of glorie," if it be not the thing principally meant. in the expression of loving Christ was included our gratitude to him on account of the personal favors we have received at his hands, and our admiration and esteem of the general excellencies of his character, both as the redeemer of the world, and as that illustrious being, who in the original perfection of his nature was "the brightness of the father's glorie" and nearest "image of his person." but, if he be not only the redeemer of this or that particular individual, but freely "gave himself for the sins of the whole world," it cannot but be our *dutie* out of a principle of generous, disinterested, universal love, to "rejoice" in this "common salvation," and to congratulate our fellow creatures as well as ourselves upon the blessings of the gospel and the riches of divine grace so signally displayed in it.

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Again, fifthly, there is a yet farther moral obligation incumbent upon us in consequence of the discoveries, that have been made to us concerning the Lord Jesus. and that is a most reverential obedience to his authoritie, as the great prophet of the most high, together with an awful fear of his displeasure as the deputed representative of the supreme, eternal majestie of heaven and earth in the judgment of the world. this is a dutie, which, though not perhaps so distinctly specified by any of his apostles, has however been particularly and expressly pointed out by our Savior himself. “for the father, he has declared, judgeth “no man,” i. e. immediately and in person, it being absolutely inconsistent with the infinite majestie of his nature to preside by some external form assumed, could either the simplicitie, the spiritualitie or the immensitie of his being be supposed to admit it, in any visible external scene, even though it be that of the public universal judgment; “but has committed all judgment to the “son, that all men should honor the son, even “as they honor the father.” “he that honoreth “not the son, honoreth not the father, who hath “sent him.” as Jesus Christ has given sufficient evidence of his preaching the glad tidings of the gospel by commission from the father and under the sanction of his authoritie, and as we profess not to entertain any doubt of this, it is apparent, that the very same regards must needs be due to his

precepts and commands thus divinely authenticated, as if they had been pronounced by the supreme deitie himself in person. and to slight and despise them must evidently terminate, in a contempt, not only of Jesus Christ the messenger of the father, but of the father himself, "who sent him." in like manner, if Jesus Christ be the deputed judge of men, if in that capacitie he acts as the commissioner of the eternal, universal sovereign, it is evidently both our interest and our dutie, to stand in equal awe of the decisions of that high tribunal, as if indeed this great, eternal sovereign himself was by an immediate sensible presence to preside in it. these are sentiments, which we find to have been very accurately, forcibly and comprehensively expressed in the language of that prophetic psalm already referred to; "serve the Lord, (Jehovah) " with fear, and rejoyce with trembling. kiss the " Son, (reverently own his authoritie) lest he be " angrie, and thou perish from the way, when his " wrath is kindled but a little." such likewise is the meaning of that expression, and the general import of the dutie, "praying in the name of " Christ." it evidently implies the offering up our supplications before the throne of God with that temper and disposition of mind, with that simplicitie and integritie of spirit, with that exalted pietie and fervent devotion, which alone correspond to the nature and genius of that religion, which, as his disciples, we profess, with a temper
most

most exactly agreeable to those rules, which, as the prophet of God, he has enjoined upon us, and by which, as the vicerent of God in the judgment of mankind, he will determine our fate hereafter. and in the same sense the apostle urges it upon us, that we perform everie dutie in the name of the Lord Jesus. “whatsoever ye do in word or deed, “do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*,” with a just sense of those peculiar obligations, which in consequence of your professed subjection to his authoritie, must needs so strongly bind you to be cultivating the sublimest, the most generous, and the most extensive principles of virtue. this language may likewise implie, and might by the apostle himself be jointly intended to mean, the doing it out of love and affection to him. this is evidently, what the performing this or that particular action in the name of another sometimes denotes. it is said, for instance, by our Savior; “whosoever shall give a cup of cold water to a “disciple in the name of a disciple, he shall in no “wise lose his reward.” “in the name of a disciple,” that is out of love and affection to him, as a disciple.

Thus have we attempted a somewhat more particular and distinct account of the several moral duties incumbent upon us, in consequence of the discoveries, that have been made in scripture concerning the person, the character and the offices of our Lord Jesus Christ; and I procede to make some useful reflections upon the topic.

On the moral duties peculiar to the gospel.

And first it is to be observed, that, though these duties be strictly peculiar to the gospel, though they be wholly founded upon what has been there reveled concerning the dignitie, character and offices of the Son of God; yet have they a most direct and admirable tendencie both to enforce and to enliven the practice of universal virtue. if we “love, for example, the Lord Jesus Christ in sinceritie and truth, will not such an affection of necessity have some corresponding influence upon our life and temper?” and what are the fruits to be expected from a disposition like this towards a being so consummate in moral excellencie of nature, if not those of the moral kind? are we thankful for the privileges of the gospel bestowed upon us by this generous benefactor? must we not in consequence be solicitous to improve them to that end and design, with a sole intire view to which we have by him been invested with them? can we be truly thankful for a gift, and yet never think of employing it in a manner agreeable to the intention of the giver in conferring it? now Christ “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquitie.” and if such a gift, so rich, so glorious, so unspeakably great, and bestowed for such an end, does not produce in our minds a love of virtue and abhorrence and detestation of iniquitie, what must become of all our pretensions to gratitude on account of it? must they not appear to everie discerning eye, to everie one, who has his

“ senses

“ senses exercised to distinguish between good and
“ evil,” to be vain, frivolous, hypocritical and
abominable? again, do we admire the essential ex-
cellencies of our Savior’s pure, spotless and most
lovely character? do we take a complacencie in it
on account of it’s inherent worth? do we reve-
rence a being of such matchless virtue? what evi-
dence can we give of this either to the world or to
ourselves, if we are not ambitious to resemble these
excellencies we profess to admire? and what is it
to resemble Christ, but to be conformed to the uni-
versal maxims of moral righteousness? in short, to
love Christ, is to love virtue itself, virtue in it’s
most alluring and attractive form. it is therefore
a principle, that must be in the highest degree
conducting to the practice of virtue. and that no-
thing might be wanting to enforce upon us a due
consideration of this close and intimate connexion,
our Savior himself has explicitly and in the most
solemn manner insisted upon it. “ if ye love
“ me, keep my commandments.” his command-
ments, all of which are comprehended in that
“ love, which is the fulfilling of the law,” or of
everie moral obligation. farther, do we trust in
Christ for salvation? with what proprietie, with
what consistencie can we do this; if we never
think of complying with those conditions, upon
which alone he is impowered to bestow it? and
what are they; but that we “ love the Lord our
“ God, with all our heart, and all our soul, and
“ all.

“all our mind, and our neighbor as ourselves?” so that the more securely we rely upon him for the accomplishment of all our everlasting hopes, even this salvation of our souls, if it be indeed a true, evangelical reliance, the more earnestly and diligently shall we be exerting every power and faculty of our natures in the practice of that “holiness, without” which “no man can” possibly obtain it: the more thoroughly shall we be convinced of this very truth itself, and consequently the more solicitous for being in the temper of our minds conformed to it. for in bestowing the rewards of eternal life he will most assuredly act as the “faithful minister of that God, who “cannot look upon iniquity with pleasure.” to whose nature and perfections therefore it must be an everlasting contrariety to suppose, that they can ever be bestowed upon any by the instrumentalities and agency of our Lord Jesus Christ, who are not “the followers of God,” as dear children, the imitators of this divine purity and holiness. again, do we “rejoice” in Christ Jesus on account of the saving benefits of his gospel conferred, not only upon ourselves, but upon so great a part of our species? what must such a joy as this imply as the necessary consequence, as the immediate result of it, but a fervent zeal in promoting the knowledge and efficacy of the gospel amongst mankind; “a contending earnestly for the faith, which “was once delivered unto the saints?” this might
very

very properly have been mentioned as one of the distinct peculiar duties of the gospel. but as it is so evidently founded upon these other duties of gratitude and love to our Lord Jesus, and of benevolent joy and triumph in that most excellent system of religion, of which he has been the "author and finisher," I chose rather to mention it in this particular connexion, as by this means it is placed, I apprehend, in the strongest point of view. *in this connexion it must undeniably appear, that we, the professed disciples of Christ, cannot be indifferent about christian truth, about the propagation, interest and success of it in the world, without being at the same time indifferent to the welfare of immortal souls, with all that increase and accumulation of guilt, which must necessarily arise from being in a most perverse, unnatural state of mind towards the greatest, most glorious and lovely being in the universe, next to the supreme, eternal father of all. once more, can we properly reverence the authority of our Savior as the prophet of God, and the appointed judge of men; can we with any tolerable meaning be said to do this at all, if we pay no regard to those laws of moral purity and righteousness, which in his prophetic character he has enjoined for the rule of our actions, and to which in his judicial one he has so solemnly assured us, that he will inviolably adhere? thus evident is it, that all the peculiar duties of the moral kind inculcated in the gospel

gospel are in their direct and immediate nature most powerfully and excellently adapted for promoting the practice and the love of universal righteousness.

And from hence we may infer, in the second place, how much it is to be wished, that the observance of these duties consisting in the just state of our minds towards the Lord Jesus Christ should be more prevalent among the professors of his religion, and of how much importance it is, that they should be most diligently attended to by all, who “name his name.” we see, that they are not arbitrarie precepts, but flowing from nature, and intimately connected with everie moral tie. and if so, it cannot be a matter of indifference, whether we complie with them or not. and on the other hand, where those affections towards our Lord Jesus Christ, in which these duties consist are cherished, improved and ripened in the mind, what glorious effects might not naturally be expected to the unspeakable good of the world and comfort of our own souls? glorious indeed were the effects of this kind, which they did actually produce among the primitive christians. “the love of Christ” “constrained” them to everie thing, that was self-denying, generous, heroical and godlike. it enabled them to renounce all for his sake, and to suffer persecution “all the day long.” it put them upon devising everie method, by which they might promote the interest
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and success of his gospel, and the honor of his exalted name, that it might be “for a praise and for a “glorie” throughout the earth. to this principle it is, that we may justly impute the religious observation of the first day of the week so very early introduced into the christian church. it was in honor of our blessed Savior. he himself never, that we read of, gave any injunction or intimation of the kind. he seems to have referred it to the gratitude of his followers, generously leaving room and opportunitie, as we may say, for the exercise of it in this, and in some other instances perhaps, by not making them the subject of an express precept or command. an experiment no way dangerous in those happy days of religious order and holie violence, whatever consequences we might have had reason to apprehend from it in these cooler times. and as it is undeniable, that the apostles authorised this practice by their own example, it is not to be doubted, but that it was the subject of their injunction upon others, though nothing of this kind be particularly recorded; for which indeed there could be but little occasion, their example alone in this case being so abundantly sufficient.

We may observe, in the third place, that the several duties we have been speaking of as incumbent upon us towards our Lord Jesus Christ are likewise in proportion obligatorie with respect to the holie spirit. this is an inference so plain and

obvious, that the scripture seems in a great measure to have left the making of it to the natural reflexion of our own minds, by which indeed we must be instantly led to it. that important share, which was taken by this glorious being according to the counsels and appointment of the sovereign Deitie in propagating the gospel amongst mankind, and the part he still sustains in promoting it's moral influence, have been already pointed out. and to him as to the exalted "minister of God to us for "good" voluntarily employed in forwarding and advancing the eternal happiness of mankind, it is indisputable, must be due our reverence, our gratitude and our love. and it seems abundantly evident, that these very affections of mind incumbent upon us towards this glorious being are what St. Paul refered to; when he conjured the Romans "by the love of the spirit," connecting it, as he does, according to the purport of our present observation, with those that are owing to the great redeemer. "now I beseech you, brethren, for "the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love "of the spirit." possibly too, though we have elsewhere (vid. Book III. Ch. I. p. 338.) hinted at another sense of the passage, somewhat of this kind might be intended in that exhortation given by the same apostle, "grieve not the holie spirit, "whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption;" designing to intimate, that out of love and gratitude to this our illustrious, heavenly benefactor

benefactor we should be studious of cultivating that divine and holie temper of mind, [which we know must be so highly acceptable to him. in a proportionable degree several of the same duties, such as love and gratitude, must needs be owing to those angelic beings who “minister unto them, “that shall be the heirs of salvation.” “there “are,” says Origen, after enumerating in a very useful and pleasing strain, and by way of comment upon that petition of the Lord’s prayer, in which we implore of heaven the forgiveness “of our “own debts, as we forgive our debtors,” the several obligations incumbent upon us towards mankind in general, towards those sustaining this or that peculiar character, bearing such or such a relation, placed in this or the other circumstance of life or of more advanced years, towards ourselves, towards the supreme eternal Deitie, towards our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath “bought us “with his blood;” “there are too,” says he, “certain duties owing to the holy spirit, which “are discharged by not *grieving him, by whom* “*[or, it by which]* we have been sealed unto the day “of redemption; and not only by not grieving him, “but by bringing forth likewise those fruits, which “are so justly required of us in consequence of “his animating presence with our souls.”

ἐξ ἧς τις
ἡμῖν καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα οφείλη, &c. Vid. Origen De
Orat. §. lxii. p. 169, 70. Edit. Read. he imme-
diately adds; “and though we are not able pre-

“ cifully to say which is our angel, *always be-*
 “ *holding the face of our father, who is in heaven,*
 “ yet we cannot but all be sensible that there must
 “ needs be certain obligations, in which we stand
 “ indebted to him. and, if *God has made us*
 “ *spectacles to the world, to angels and to men,* be
 “ it known, that as in the theatre every per-
 “ former is obliged to speak and to act according
 “ to the proprieties of such or such a character,
 “ which, if he fails to do, he is to be considered
 “ and animadverted upon as affronting the whole
 “ bodie of spectators ; in like manner do we our-
 “ selves stand engaged to the whole world, to all
 “ the angels, to the general societie of mankind
 “ for exhibiting our proper part in the discharge
 “ of those duties, as to all which we may, if we
 “ please, be so fully instructed by the mouth of
 “ wisdom itself.”

And from the whole of what has been offered up-
 on this topic we may infer, in the fourth place, that
 as the gospel has by it's own peculiar obligations
 enlarged the system even of strictly moral duties, it
 has by that means opened so many fresh avenues of
 moral pleasure. it's peculiar duties of this kind
 consist, we see, very much in love and gratitude to-
 wards beings of highest rank in the scale and
 order of nature, and of vast, inexpressible be-
 nevolence to mankind. and these are duties, in
 the very exercise of them not a little satisfying
 and delightful to the human soul. infomuch that
 one

one of the greatest, most accurate and sublimest moralists, that ever lived, whose writings are full of everie thing, that is most divinely powerful towards purifying and exalting the mind of man, I mean Marcus Antoninus, lays it down as a rule, that “when we would regale our minds with
“ something exquisitely joyous and entertaining,
“ we should set ourselves upon recollecting the
“ worthy characters and generous deeds of our
“ acquaintance and our friends. there being no-
“ thing, as he says, so exhilarating and delight-
“ ful to the soul of man, as the images of the
“ virtues appearing in the manners of those with
“ whom we are conversant, and playing thick
“ upon the moral eye.”

ὅταν εὐφραῖναι σεαυτὸν θέλῃς
ἐνθυμῇ τα προτέρημάλα των συμβιόντων — ἔδεν γὰρ ἔτως
εὐφραίνει ὡς τὰ ὁμοιωμάλα τῶν ἀρετῶν ἐμφαινομένα τοῖς ᾄδεσι τῶν
συζώνων, καὶ ἀδρόα ὡς οἶόν τε συμπιπλόντα — Antonin. lib.

vi. §. 48. nor was he insensible of the advantages arising from an employment like this. he begins his never enough to be admired meditations with enumerating the several excellent lessons he had been himself instructed in from the examples of those around him. from one he had learned candor and modestie, from another the love of pietie and an aptitude to benevolence and charitie, from another firmness and resolution of mind in adhering to everie maxim of virtue. with what pleasure then should we be gratefully commemorating, especially in the celebration of his own appointed

appointed ordinance, the glorious redeemer of human race, who came into the world on purpose, that we might be endued in the highest degree of perfection with all the excellent graces and ornaments of the mind! and how inexpressibly great the moral efficacie to be expected from such an exercise of our affections!

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“**B**LESSED,” says the great apostle, “be ^{CONCLUSION.}
 “ the God and father of our Lord Jesus
 “ Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual bles-
 “ sings in heavenly things in Christ, according as
 “ he has chosen us in him before the foundation of
 “ the world, *that* we should be holie and without
 “ blame before him in love.” thus clearly does he
 assert innocence, puritie and charitie to have been
 the great ends proposed in the institution of the
 gospel; and this not merely on account of the
 happiness to be resulting in the present life, but in
 order to our meetness and qualification for that
 eternal felicitie, the prospect of which has in it
 been so clearly set before us. nothing surely can
 be objected to the propriety, the excellencie, the
 usefulness of such a design as this. and, if more-
 over it can be made to appear, that christianitie is
 indeed an institution in the most direct and power-
 ful manner adapted to answer such a design, it
 must then for certain be in the language of the
 same apostle a “ saying worthie of all acceptation;”
 and we cannot at least but sincerely wish, that it
 may prove “ a faithful one,” and it’s pretensions
 to

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to a divine authoritie be well and solidly supported. now among other proofs to this purpose this very excellencie itself of it's internal structure and composition, the consummate aptitude and happie tendencie of it's intire form to promote the virtue and consequently the highest good of man, will be found to carrie in it no slight or inconsiderable evidence. an evidence, which, though it cannot indeed independently and alone be sufficient for evincing it's divine authoritie, is however so essential to the credibilitie of it's external proofs, that, let these latter be ever so strong, the least flaw or deficiency in the former will be enough to invalidate their testimonie. for no miracles whatsoever can prove that religious system to be divinely authorised, which has in it the least mark of moral imperfection, any thing, that is in the least degree repugnant to the attributes of God or derogatorie to the cause of moral virtue in the world. on the other hand, if this internal evidence in favor of the gospel be everie way complete, if it appear upon an impartial survey of its real structure and composition to be the "power of God unto salvation," this at least must be the strongest imaginable presumption in it's favor. nay, I will farther add, that in conjunction with the external evidence attending it, would be abundantly sufficient to establish it's divine authoritie, even though these latter were allowed to be much less forcible and convincing than they really are. it appears indeed to

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to me, that the historical, traditionarie and miraculous evidences accompanying the gospel of Christ, would never have been called in question, had the nature, genius and intrinsic worth of the scheme itself been suitably attended to, justly represented and rightly understood. we shall therefore as the conclusion of this treatise endeavor to exhibit a brief and summarie view of the internal evidence in favor of christianitie, as it arises from that survey of it's peculiar uses, principles and duties, that has been the subject of it. and this evidence will, I apprehend, appear in the strongest point of view upon a due consideration of the three following particulars. first, that it is a system of religion in the best manner adapted for answering the purposes and promoting the interest of moral virtue; secondly, that there is the utmost improbabilitie in supposing the doctrines of it to have been the mere fictions of human fancie; thirdly, that the *truth* of them could *only* be known by divine and *special* revelation. the first of these particulars has been the great subject discussed at large in this volume. all therefore, that can here be necessarie in relation to it, is, as briefly as possible to recapitulate what under each distinct topic has been insisted upon, and to place in one concise and compendiarie view the substance of the whole. one very clear and convincing illustration then of this particular is seen in that peculiar kind of evidence, the evidence of miracles, upon which the intire system of christi-

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anitie has been established. by these miracles an additional attestation has been given to all those momentous principles and doctrines, that had before constituted that of natural religion; and in this view they are to be considered under the head of internal evidence in favor of the gospel. it's own peculiar doctrines depend solely upon this evidence, so far as relates to external proof, for their credibilitie. they cannot therefore but be a most important accession of evidence in favor of those religious principles, that had been previously promulgated by the light of reason. and such a reiterated declaration, if it cannot be thought to increase the direct demonstrative proof of them, is yet most powerfully adapted to awaken an attention to these principles and to impress our minds more effectually with a sense of their importance. so that to those, who may be inclined to think everie other peculiaritie belonging to the gospel scheme superfluous, it must, one would hope, stand highly recommended on account of it's being an authentic republication of those original and primitive truths, that had before been received amongst mankind upon the footing and evidence of nature. in these primæval truths are included a full discoverie of the being, attributes, providence and moral government of God, the relation we stand in to him, as our creator, preserver, benefactor, sovereign and judge, the terms of acceptance with him, and the rewards and punishments

ments of a future and immortal life. and it is absolutely impossible that any subsequent revelation should turn upon more interesting points, or bring to light any doctrines more essential to our happiness than these. no new attributes of the deitie can by any such revelation be discovered to us; nor any other method of obtaining his favor prescribed different from that of sincere repentance, to which we have by this original light been so clearly directed. & quia Dominus, says Irenæus, adv. hæres, lib. iv. c. xxvii. p. 313, 14. *naturalia* legis, per quæ homo *justificatur*, quæ etiam ante legislationem custodiebant, qui fide justificabantur & placebant Deo, non dissolvit, sed extendit, sed & implevit, ex sermonibus ejus ostenditur. “ and “ that our Lord did not abrogate the *natural* obligations inculcated by the mosaic law, and by “ which man is *justified*, and which even before “ the giving of the law were observed in the case “ of those who were by faith justified and pleased “ God, but extended and filled them up, is evident “ from his discourses.” he proceeds to instance in several passages of the Sermon on the Mount, and then adds; “ these things he taught, not as contrarie to, but as fulfilling and completing the “ law, and enforcing upon us the means of justification, which it prescribes.” hæc autem non quasi contraria legi docebat; sed adimplens legem, & *infigens justificationes legis in nobis*. and to the same purpose, commenting upon the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, ibid. c. lxx. p. 373. and

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supposing by the different hours of coming into it to be meant the different periods of the world, he observes, that there is but “ *one* vineyard, “ there being but *one* righteousness or method of “ justification” common to all; vinea una, quoniam & una justitia. “ for in truth,” says Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromat. lib. vi. p. 667. G. “ there is but *one* covenant of salvation, which “ has from the very beginning of the world through “ its successive times and generations, been transmitted to us, though the methods of establishing “ or communicating the knowledge of it have been “ different.” *μία μὲν γὰρ τῷ ὄντι διαθήκη ἡ σωτήριος, ἀπὸ καὶ αὐτοῦ κόσμου εἰς ἡμᾶς δέχουσα, &c.* “ so that,” as he goes on, “ it is still one and the same *immutable* “ method of salvation, the knowledge of which is “ by one and the same deity communicated, “ through one and the same Lord, by different “ yet all of them profitable, and well-adapted “ means.” *ἀκόλουθον γὰρ εἶναι μίαν ἀμετάθετον σωτηρίας δόσιν, παρὰ ἐνὸς Θεοῦ, δι’ ἐνὸς Κυρίου πολυτρόπως ὠφελεῖσθαι.* and it seems evidently to have been with the same sentiments and ideas that Tertull. adv. Judæos, c. ii. p. 184. expresses himself as follows; unde Noe justus inventus, si non illum *naturalis* legis *justitia* præcedebat? unde Abraham amicus Dei deputatus, si non de æquitate & justitiâ legis *naturalis*? unde Melchisedec sacerdos Dei summi nuncupatus, si non antè Leviticæ legis sacerdotium Levitæ fuerunt, qui sacrificio Deo offerebant? “ how came Noah to be found “ *righteous,*

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“ *righteous*, if there had not been some preceding
 “ *righteousness* of *natural* law? whence Abraham
 “ accounted the friend of God, if not from the
 “ moral principles of equitie and justice incul-
 “ cated by the law of nature? or why Mel-
 “ chisedec denominated the priest of the most
 “ high God, if before the Levitical law, there had
 “ not been Levites, who offered sacrifices to God?”
 from hence it necessarily follows, that the highest
 excellencie of those peculiar discoveries, that are
 made to us in the gospel, as well as of the peculiar
 evidences, that attended the preaching of it, must
 necessarily consist in their being calculated to incul-
 cate after the most convincing and lively manner
 those religious truths and principles, that had been
 previously made known by the light of reason; not
 in furnishing men with new radical principles in
 religion, or making any essential alteration in the
 nature of it, but in illustrating and enforcing that
 one uniform doctrine of true and acceptable reli-
 gion, which being originally founded upon the
 nature of God and man must of necessitie in everie
 period of time and under everie particular dispen-
 sation of it be fundamentally the same. and upon
 this view of things the gospel will appear to have
 in it the highest degree of excellencie and impor-
 tance, that any accessionarie, external, special or
 miraculous institution of religion can possibly be
 supposed to carrie in it. in this one point all it's
 peculiar discoveries directly and invariably center.
what

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what in any such institution could we have expected or can we wish for more, than that all the great doctrines of original, essential, everlasting religion, should be illustrated both in the clearest and most affecting manner; in a manner at once adapted to strengthen in the understanding our conviction of their truth and to impress upon our affections a practical sense of their importance? and here how eminently does the gospel triumph? not a principle it contains, not a truth it reveals, in which these ends are not jointly pursued and most happily accomplished. thus for example in the præ-existent dignitie of that inconceivably great and glorious being, who "in the fulness of the time" appeared upon earth in the character of man's redeemer, we have the most striking evidence given us of the realitie of another world; an evidence founded upon the direct and credible testimonie, a testimonie in the highest degree venerable, of one, who has actually been in it. in the same wonderful epiphanie or appearance, in an embassie so grand and august we have the dignitie of human nature, that generous, animating incentive to everie virtue, in the strongest manner confirmed. the dignitie likewise of this glorious being as discovered to us in the gospel has the most natural and efficacious tendencie towards impressing upon our minds that reverential sense of the divine majestie, which cannot but in it's genuin influences be most powerfully adapted for preserving the integritie

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integritie and moral puritie of our natures inviolate. CONCLUSION.
 great and illustrious as is the Savior of the world in
 the original honors of his nature, he is nevertheless
 constantly spoken of in the scriptures as the
 "servant" of the most high, and frequently repre-
 sented in the humblest posture of homage and
 adoration before his throne. and yet when we
 consider, that it was by the appointment of this
 sovereign deitie, that he came into the world in
 order to sustain the character of our Savior, this
 high, exalted dignitie of his person is no less an
 illustration of the richness of the divine com-
 passions, than it is of the supreme, unrivaled glories
 of the divine majestie and "greatness." and as we
 are expressly informed, that this illustrious being,
 notwithstanding all the superangelic excellence of
 his nature, "learned obedience by the things,
 which he suffered," what a clear inspiring view is
 by this means given us of the progressive and eter-
 nally advancing nature of virtue? in the incar-
 nation of so glorious a person, that stupendous act
 of humiliation, yet so chearfully submitted to for
 our sakes, what a persuasive, affectionate, and one
 would think almost irresistible, address is made to
 the ingenuous and grateful principles of our
 natures! and what an instructive lesson of con-
 descension are we taught by it? condescension
 even to the very lowest offices and meanest em-
 ployments, by which we can be of any real service
 to our fellow-creatures around us; none of which
 can

can in any degree of comparison be so debasing to us, as was this in point of external character and appearance to the son of God? and what a contemptible view has it given us of all the pride and haughtiness of man. again, in the example of Christ what an amiable illustration have we of every moral obligation? how lovely the form of virtue as exhibited in the Savior's godlike life? in what attractive, charming attitudes does she there appear? what sublime and generous maxims, what solid, rational and salutary principles of action are to be deduced from this spotless model so exactly adapted to every circumstance and condition of humanity? what a peculiar force and energy is there in this example considered as that of our condescending friend and compassionate redeemer? how happily is it fitted by its sinless perfection to inspire our souls with an unwearied ardor of pursuit after the most exalted attainments in all that is truly excellent and divine? with what a peculiar force and energy of moral persuasion are the precepts of the gospel inculcated by one, who was himself the most exact and punctual observer of them? and how strongly corroborative of the credibility of his doctrine must be this his unstained character and absolutely spotless life? how is the wonderful condescension of our Savior's incarnation in itself so powerfully adapted to operate upon the grateful sentiments of our minds, increased nevertheless and heightened still by the consideration of the sufferings,

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sufferings, which in this incarnate state he underwent, the povertie of his condition here on earth, the insults, calumnie and malice, to which he was continually exposed, and the incessant toils and hardships he endured for our sakes! how naturally do the sorrows of this holie, innocent, exalted being tend to reconcile our minds to the conditions of humanitie, and to confirm us in the most honorable opinion of the divine, universal providence, notwithstanding any afflictions that the best and worthiest among human kind may meet with here? with what candor and modestie may we learn from these sufferings of the redeemer to determine upon the moral characters of those around us, when considering them in any kind of connexion with their external lot? and how effectually are we taught by them the vanitie and presumption of derogating from the merit of any on account of the calamities, whether of one kind or of another, with which we may see them to be depressed? and how happily are the sorrows he endured, adapted to inspire us his professed disciples with a self-denying, suffering, generous zeal in behalf of mankind and in the cause of truth and virtue? but in the death of Christ and in that atoning blood he shed upon the ignominious cross, with what peculiar lustre, with what an high, superlative eminence do the honors of his gospel appear! such was the invincible compassion he feelled towards our fallen race, that he loved

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us even to the death. and had he not done this, so essential in the scheme of our salvation were his dying agonies and expiring breath, had he not done this, had he not indeed thus loved us even “unto death,” in vain with respect to us had been both the wonders of his incarnation and the merits of his life. his gospel must then have died in the very period of its birth. and we, for any thing, which by it could have been done to save us, must have perished “in our sins.” in these stupendous transactions of the cross, where that great sacrifice, the sacrifice even of the Son of God himself was once offered up for the sins of the world, what an awful, explicit full declaration was made of the turpitude and deformitie of sin and of the displeasure of God against it? and as God “spared not his own son, “but freely delivered him up for us all,” what a bright and satisfying display have we in these transactions likewise of his placabilitie and forgiving mercie? who can doubt of the worth, the value, the future existence of those souls, which so illustrious a being, as he, who is “the brightness of “the father’s glorie and expresse image of his “person, died to redeem?” and finally, how prodigiously must it increase and heighten the “constraining” power of his “love” to think, that, notwithstanding all this transcending dignitie of nature, he submitted to a death so full of *ignominie*, so full of *pain* for his “bodie’s sake,” “which “is the church.” in the exaltation of Christ what an *honor* was conferred upon *virtue*! what a *demonstration*

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demonstration given us of it's acceptableness in the sight of God! and what a glorious pledge and earnest of our own! what a lively idea does the *exaltation* of a being so eminent in the original honors of his nature suggest to us of that inexhaustible power of God, by which he is enabled to be the infinitely munificent rewarder of all who diligently seek him? how easily may we believe the eternal progress of the virtuous soul in felicitie and glorie, when we recollect, that even he, who had "lain in the bosom of the father from the "begining," could yet have his blifs and honors so highly advanced? and from the nature of that illustrious office, to which he is exalted, which is no other than that of being dispenser of eternal life to the children of men, the grand medium of the divine communications to the good and virtuous, how naturally may we infer, that much of our own happiness in the future world will consist in the exercises of love and friendship, and that therefore it must needs be utterly impossible, that we should ourselves be qualified for it without having the temper of love and charitie prevalent in our breasts? and when we consider, that Christ has been exalted at the right hand of the supreme father's majestie on account only of the love and compassion he had shewn to us, what a clear and undeniable proof is this of the benevolence of that sovereign deitie himself towards his creature man? in the intercession, which our glorious redeemer

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is there carrying on, what endearing tenderness and love! what an honor done to our natures! what a solemn reverential homage paid to the divine, pointing out to us with what humilitie and awe it is, that we are to prostrate ourselves before the footstool of the great creator and Lord of all! what a convincing argument have we in this intercession, the intercession of a being so consummately glorious in the excellencies and honors of his nature, so transcendently meritorious in the dignitie and greatness of his undertakings, in the fidelitie and generous ardor, with which he prosecuted and fulfilled them, in proof of the placabilitie of that sovereign deitie, by whose appointment he intercedes in our behalf, and of whom therefore it would be the most manifest absurditie to suppose that he should not in his own essential nature be a God of supreme and boundless mercie? and what an unexceptionable proof does it afford us of the proprietie of being, in our own acts of homage and devotion, intercessors with the sovereign majestie in behalf of mankind?

Were we now to take a brief review of what has in the progress of this work been so largely and particularly insisted upon in relation to the scripture-doctrine of the holie spirit, it would be in effect to recollect, that many of the same admirable uses, to which the discoveries, that have been made in the gospel in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, are with so much force and energie
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to be applied, are likewise clearly discernible in that doctrine. at present I shall recur only to the two following particulars: first, that in the ministration of this illustrious being as the great agent of providence in promoting the interest and reception of the gospel at the time of it's first publication, and in that office, which he now exercises as the encourager and abettor of it's moral influences upon the heart of man, we have the clearest and most explicit demonstration given us of the supreme importance of virtue; and then secondly, in this latter, as seems to me, the most convincing argument afforded us in behalf of a future state. for is it not altogether incredible, that a being of such conspicuous dignitie in the scale of intellectual and moral natures, should have been appointed by the eternal deitie himself to the office of ministering throughout everie age of the world to the advancement and support of human virtue, if, after all, that virtue was so soon to be extinct, as at the close of the present life?

The inconceivable greatness of the divine majestie, the dignitie of human nature, the importance of human virtue, are likewise considerations in the strongest manner enforced upon us by the doctrine of angels as delivered in the holie scriptures; by that humble and most reverential homage, which these exalted beings are continually offering up before the throne of God, in that ministration, in which they are ever employed in behalf

half of man, and by the particular nature of it as intended to promote the cause and interest of virtue in the world. and as the scripture has been so particular in informing us, that it is in the company of these glorious *holie* spirits, that we are to pass our happie eternitie, what can give us a more convincing apprehension of the absolute necessitie of being ourselves possessed of an holie and virtuous temper? how else can we be happie in being associated with them? in the fall of so many of these glorious beings, what an awful lesson have we given us inculcating religious fear and caution? what an alarming view of the horrors and malignitie of sin in the description, as contained in the scriptures, of their detestable character; particularly of those vices, such as pride, ingratitude, envie, lying and murder, in which more especially their apostacie consisted? and what an idea must it needs give us of the wretchedness allotted for the wicked and impenitent in a future world, to think of their being there connected in societie with those accursed spirits, whose revilings and upbraidings, whose scoffs and jeers, whose calumnies and reproches will so dreadfully encrease and aggravate the tormenting reflexions of their own minds! and on the other hand, what pleasing ideas may we collect, additionally to those suggested by the light of nature upon this head, from the discoveries of the gospel in relation to the felicities and glories of the eternal state; where,

where, according to this information given us, we are to be united in societie, not only with “ the
 “ spirits of just men made perfect,” not only
 with the glorious angelic orders, but with the
 exalted Redeemer himself? from whence we may
 most certainly conclude it to be a state, in which
 we shall be richly sharing in the divine compla-
 cencie, and be after a manner inexpressibly feli-
 citating, employed in celebrating the praises and
 magnifying the goodness of the great and sove-
 reign creator. and with what a peculiar force
 and energie are all these considerations relating
 both to the miserie and to the happiness of a
 future world inculcated by the doctrine of a so-
 lemn, public, general judgment of mankind, and
 by all those grand transactions and circumstances
 attending it, which in treating upon that doctrine
 we have particularly enumerated? such then is
 the admirable structure and composition of the
 gospel scheme, in all it’s glorious peculiarities
 thus uniformly centering in the moral point. and
 so strictly just the observation made by Mr. Baxter
 and occuring in his Life of Faith, Part II. c. iii.
 No. IX. p. 101, that “ there is nothing in *the*
 “ *gospel*, either unsuitable to the first law of na-
 “ ture, or contradictory to it, or yet of any
 “ *alien* nature; but *only* that which has the most
 “ excellent aptitude to subserve it.” nevertheless
 admirable as is it’s tendencie towards advancing
 the highest interest of our immortal natures, it is
 evident,

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evident, that it cannot to this purpose have any effect farther than it's principles are cordially and rationally assented to, a compliance with it's obligations deliberately and seriously resolved upon, and it's privileges and benefits both explicitly and affectionately recollected. now for answering these very ends it is that christianitie itself has so particularly insisted upon the importance of our own personal conviction of it's truth, and a well-grounded assent to it's doctrines in assuring us, that " he, who believeth, shall be saved," and that " he, who believeth not, shall be damned ;" and that it has enjoined upon us by all the force of it's own miraculous and divine authoritie the ordinances of baptism and of the holie supper. and, to conclude this recapitulation, it has in our immediately preceding chapter been shewn at large, that those moral duties, which are peculiar to the gospel, and founded upon relations, which it alone has discovered, are in the happiest manner adapted for enforcing the obligations of universal moralitie. the excellencie then and perfection of the gospel scheme in all it's peculiar discoveries, uses and injunctions, being thus evident and apparent, let us pursue the argument in favor of it arising from this it's intrinsic and essential worth,

By observing, in the second place, how utterly improbable it must be, that a religious institution of this character should have been the mere fiction
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of human fancie. there is in the gospel both the highest dignitie and the highest simplicitie; dignitie, for it was intended to make us "partakers of the divine nature." dignitie in conjunction with simplicitie: since in this single point all it's doctrines naturally, directly, obviously, and uniformly conspire. it has in it that true and genuin characteristic of beautie, uniformitie in conjunction with varietie. amidst the most entertaining diversitie of particulars the grand end is invariably kept in view and ever appears to be the same. so that, if it be a fiction it is the most elegant and masterly one, that human ingenuitie ever yet contrived. shall we then suppose a few fishermen to have been the authors of it? who would think of ascribing to the apostles such a work as Telemachus or the Æneid of Virgil? the same kind of incongruitie there is in supposing that they could have been the inventors of the gospel; that work so exquisitely beautiful in the structure and harmonie of it's doctrines. and the same reasoning would have appeared equally conclusive with respect to our Savior himself, supposing christianitie to be an imposture, and that he was in realitie nothing more or higher in nature, than what his external form and condition imported. besides, had the gospel been a mere human contrivance, it would probably have been in some degree or another accommodated to the times, which gave birth to it. it was published among the jews, and

by those, who were jews themselves, yet so far was it from being adapted to their peculiar taste, that for it's not being so, but wholly the reverse, they rejected it with scorn. it was proclaimed among the gentiles, but so far was it from suffering itself to be incorporated with their superstitions and idolatrie, that it declared irreconcilable and eternal enmitie against them. and on both these accounts the apostles in their promulgation of it were exposed to all manner of sufferings and persecution. but is it likely they would even have run the hazard of this, much less have actually endured it, for the sake of indulging any fancie of their own; in relation to which they could not, had it been such a fancie merely, have had the least prospect of success?

But then thirdly, as it appears thus utterly improbable, that the gospel should be the mere fiction of human fancie, it is to be observed, as the completion of the argument we are upon and so far as relates to it's peculiar doctrines, that the truth of them could only be known by divine and special revelation. what fancie could never have invented, or formed the least idea of, the researches however of a just and legitimate philosophie has often brought to light. but how long might men have philosophised, before they could have discovered, that there was such a being as Jesus Christ existing in nature, "by whom God made the " worlds," whom he sent into this of ours, as his messenger

messenger to mankind; and that it was this glorious person himself, who lived and died in Judæa, during the residence there of Pontius Pilate the roman governor of that province; that in reward of his consummate and matchless virtue in becoming incarnate, in submitting to so low and humble a condition of human life, in under-going such a varietie of sufferings and reproach, in at length enduring the painful death of a malefactor, accompanied with everie additional circumstance of indignitie that utmost malice could contrive, of that abundant compassion and tenderness to mankind, which in these various scenes he manifested and displayed, and fidelitie, with which he executed the purposes of sovereign love in our behalf, “ he
 “ is now exalted at the right hand of the father,
 “ far above all principalitie and power and might
 “ and dominion and everie name, that is named
 “ not only in this world, but also in that, which
 “ is to come,” that in this his exalted state he
 “ continually maketh intercession for us,” that he is the great dispenser of eternal happiness to mankind, and that as the vice-gerent of God he will appear at the end of the world to preside in the public judgment of it? who by dint of reasoning and philosophical speculation could ever have discovered that there was such a glorious being, as the holie spirit employed as the minister of the divine moral government in establishing the gospel at first, and promoting in everie age it's purifying

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and reforming influences upon the heart of man? who by any such means could have given us a description of the angelic world, or the historie of the apostate infernal spirits? as then it is to the last degree improbable, that the system of christianitie, as contained in the scriptures, should have been the fiction of human imagination, so likewise it is evident, that the truth and certaintie of it's peculiar doctrines could not have become the objects of human knowlege but by means of special revelation. and from these observations compared with it's admirable tendencie and external proofs, we may, I presume, safely conclude, we cannot I think rationally do otherwise in the case, that it must be indeed a miraculously attested and divine institution of religion. upon this head Dr. Scott has in the following passage of his Christian Life, Vol. V. p. 353, 4, with great propriety expressed himself. "as for *christianitie*," says he, "it is a *religion* made up of the most " *divine* and *godlike* institutions; it's precepts " being such as are most *worthy* of God, en- " joining nothing but what is either *true* god- " lines, and most *generous* moralitie, or what are " the most efficacious means and instruments of " promoting them. and as for it's doctrine, it " partly consists of those principles of *natural* " *religion*, which all *wise* men, of whatsoever na- " tion or religion, have owned and acknowledged, " such as the *existence*, *unity* and *providence* of the " *Godhead*,

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“ *Godhead, the immortality of the soul and the*
 “ *rewards and punishments of another life, together*
 “ *with the great day of accounts, wherein men*
 “ *shall receive according to what they have done*
 “ *in the flesh : and even the doctrine of the Holy*
 “ *Trinity, which is the profoundest mystery of all*
 “ *our religion, has been owned and professed by*
 “ *the greatest and most famous Philosophers that*
 “ *ever were. and as for those doctrines, that are*
 “ *purely Christian, such as the Birth and Life and*
 “ *Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of our*
 “ *Saviour, together with his sitting at the right*
 “ *hand of God, and coming at the last Day to*
 “ *judge the world, they are all of them so ex-*
 “ *cellently contrived to serve the great Ends of*
 “ *religion, so wonderfully pregnant with Motives*
 “ *and Arguments to engage men to the greatest*
 “ *Purity and Goodness, that by their own native*
 “ *Beauty and excellent contrivance, they manifest*
 “ *themselves to be the products of a divine*
 “ *wisdom.*”

Let us not however content ourselves with any
 such conclusions merely. let us not vainly tri-
 umph over the infidel-rejecter of the gospel either
 in our own or other christian countrie, or over the
 heathen, that has never been enlightened with the
 knowlege or favored with the propofals of it, on ac-
 count only of being ourselves within the pale of
 the christian church. for we see what is the great
 end of christianitie---puritie of heart, simplicitie
 of

of nature, the habit of resolute, generous, godlike virtue. and if the end of it be not answered in our temper and disposition, what can it avail us to have had it's outward form? " what manner of persons then ought we to be in all holie conversation and godliness?" or " how can we expect to escape, if we neglect so GREAT SALVATION, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them, that heard him, God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the holie ghost," according to his own will, the free, unmerited determinations of his own infinite benevolence and mercie?

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